



# Twenty-Five Years of Organized Work in Florida and Georgia

by

Church of the Brethren

from 1925 to 1950

Work up to 1912 was independent;  
a part of N. and S. Carolina for 13 years.

by

JAMES H. MORRIS

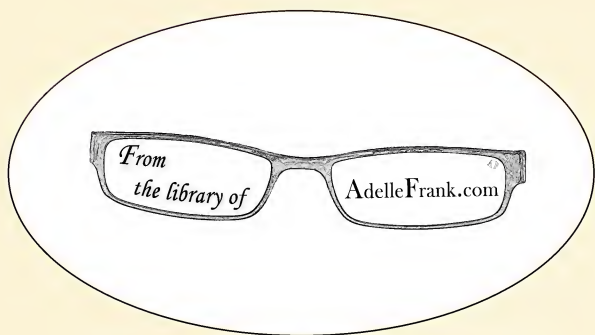
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## PREFACE

In this brief history of the work of the Church of the Brethren in the District of Florida and Georgia, I might have selected a few of the outstanding workers and made them appear as heroes by collecting all the work they did in building up the churches, but I prefer to see the many teams that built it up. Some broad-minded, self-sacrificing Northerners came into a community and naturally found that same type of Southerners and the two working together built up a strong Church by Brethren team work. If the Northerner wanted to be the whole team his work did not appeal to the rest of the group and the work was slow and never prospered as it should. We are glad to note that the organic difference between the North and South is breaking down, and much more is being accomplished in Church as well as secular work.

No doubt, it would be interesting to you to know how Brethren and Sisters responded to my calls for information about their families and church activities. Most of them were helpful but slow about getting it to me but in one extreme case, one good Sister would not even tell me anything about her deceased husband. She has a self-addressed envelope with postage paid on it yet. I wish I had space to give the names of all my loyal helpers

but space will not allow that, but to all I wish to send a hearty Thank You for your help.

Possibly you will find some omissions of what you consider important matters or some mistake in some of the facts that have been put into the Book. Maybe the error is mine or maybe some of my helpers gave it wrong but I am willing to bear my part of the responsibility and beg your pardon, for no error has been intentional but accidental and we are all finite beings. This collecting and editing has been freely a labor of Love and will you accept as it has been given?

August 31, 1953.

JAMES H. MORRIS

## FOREWORD

In introducing this small book of Historical Facts about the Church of the Brethren, we need to acquaint you with a few facts about the Commercial standing of the State: its land area was first under the Spanish Flag 1559 to 1718; a French Flag for five years; Flag of Great Britain 1819 to 1821; and then under the Stars and Stripes since 1821. While under the Spanish Flag, the City of St. Augustine was built (1565). The land area is equal to the combined area of the six New England States. The soil is mostly sand and muck, the sand being underlaid with Red Clay sub-soil. This sand and clay soil extends most of the way from Escambia County thru the center of the State to Highlands County, about 600 miles. The State ships a trainload of farm products every hour of every day thruout the year; ships 15,000 carloads of strawberries; 25,000 carloads of Grapefruit; 30,000 carloads of Oranges; 12,000 carloads of Tomatoes; 7,000 carloads of Celery (from Sanford); Manufactured goods worth \$150 million. These figures represent the Annual output. The State could supply the world with sugar, if given a chance. Florida was admitted as a state March 3, 1845; its Capital is Tallahassee and largest city is Miami with Jacksonville and Tampa not so far behind in population; its traffic is routed over Railroads, Buses or Airplanes. There are five Railroads with



4,000 miles of track; thousands of miles of the best hard-surfaced roads found anywhere; Landing Fields for Airplanes near every large city; several good harbors for landing large Sea-Going Vessels from all parts of the world; it has the largest Sponge industry in the world; it has the largest Apiary in the World. When U. S. bought it from Spain, it cost about 11 cents per acre; there are 250 different varieties of crops, nuts, fruits and vegetables grown and shipments average one car every six minutes, day and night, the year round; it has six hundred varieties of fish; it has no bonded debt; Quoting a bit from the St. Augustine Record of about twenty-five years back will help to summarize some things: "Do you think of your Florida as a Tourist resort or as a place to grow oranges or as a place to fish and enjoy the sunshine? Or do you go farther afield and find that the Cucumber crop this year brought the growers \$1,000 an acre? Plant City shipped over three million quarts of strawberries? The water melon crop brought \$2,000 per acre? . . . These are only a few figures to show that Florida is not only the Playground of the nation but also the Market Basket of the world. And then remember that our average temperature is as follows, June 80, July 82, August 81, September 78 over a period of fifty three years. Farming, fruit growing, bulb growing, cattle, hogs, poultry industries and commercial enterprises of all kinds . . . make up the picture of Florida that beats the world and the world is finding it out."

The author may not need much introduction to most of the readers of the Book but these few facts may clear up for the stranger who he is and where he came from. He was born six miles south of Everett, Penn'a. along the Tussey Mountains, August 31, 1876. Began his school work six years later in Rays Cove in a five-month school. Began teaching in a one-room school in 1898 in Hopewell Township, north of Everett about six miles. Secured a State Permanent Certificate in Penn'a. in 1902. Entered Manchester College to study Bible and assist in teaching Mathematics, to help pay expenses. Entered Bridgewater College as teacher of Arithmetic, Algebra and Geometry in Sept. 1906. In 1909 finished the work at Valparaiso University for Science and Arts Degrees. After a year as Principal in Herrin High School and two years in Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he received the Degree Th.B. in May 1912. Secured the M.A. Degree from Manchester College thru research work at several universities and Bethany Bible School.

In working his way thru College, he scrubbed floors, waited tables, taught in Winter and went to school in Summer, assisted in Mathematics at Manchester and Bridgewater Colleges. While doing Evangelistic work in Oklahoma, he conducted Bible Institutes, using outlines worked out for the occasion: "Forty Lessons in Acts of the Apostles and Epistles of Paul" and "Outline of Redemption" He did some Pastoral work, teaching High School

and almost five years of teaching Bible and Church History at Bethany Bible School. While teaching at Bethany, he collected and published a History of the Church work of the Brethren in Texas and Oklahoma. In his fifty-one years in the Ministry, he has preached one or more sermons in twenty of the States of the Union, having been in or passed thru forty of the forty-eight States. After eighteen years of the last twenty-nine in the State of Florida, he is offering to you what he has found out about the doings of the Church of the Brethren in the District of Fla. and Ga.

The Son of Elder J. H. Moore, James M. Moore has this to say about his work and knowledge of Florida: "It was in March of 1884, when I was a bit past eight years of age, that my parents moved from Mt. Morris, Illinois to Keuka, Florida. From then until I was fifteen we lived five years at Keuka and two years at Waycross, Georgia. Hence I partially grew up among the beauties of the South-land.

I distinctly remember the simplicity of life in that Keuka community. The little Churchhouse was simple indeed, neat but for several years with no ceiling or plastering on the inside. It was a place of worship, and as such it was greatly appreciated. I have never seen more earnestness in church and Sunday School work than was manifest in those people in Putnam County, Fla.

During those several years we had no series

of revival meetings yet frequently there were those to be baptized. Those gatherings for baptism at the lake about fifty yards from the church are still vivid in my memory. My baptism there in Feb. of 1887 makes the place especially sacred to me.

Those early experiences have had much to do with my continued special interest in the work in Florida. I have always rejoiced in the reports of the Church's progress. Since the beginning of the work at Sebring in 1916 I have made a dozen trips to the State, visiting my parents, for special meetings and a couple time on business.

At various times I have felt a special desire that I might have the opportunity to invest some of my life in helping to promote the work of the kingdom in Florida, but somehow the way never opened. My help has been confined to prayer, occasional visits and some small contributions in money. I have great hopes that the church in the Southland will grow year by year."

In response to my invitation to say something about Church work in Florida, Dr. Ernest Davis writes the following: "Early in 1951 I held a meeting for eight days at the Winter Park Church and a year later was at the Sebring Church for a similar period in their Bible Institute. I was well impressed with what I saw in both places.

Winter Park has a good congregation of resident people with a solid type of leadership. The business and cultural advantages of the area are



excellent. Our people have a good standing in the community. I like the community, the church people and the future prospects there.

The Sebring Church has an excellent church plant, a substantial local membership, and a phenomenal tourist congregation during the Winter season. Many of the tourists come back year after year, and quite a number have bought residential property and regard Sebring as their home. These people naturally have a great interest in the church program and participate actively in it. The Sebring Church does a good job of ministering to these tourists and in return receives considerable support from them. The pastor of this church has an opportunity for a unique ministry in the Church of the Brethren.

While in Florida, I saw something of Camp Ithiel. The District is using imagination, vision and good judgment as well as investments of time and money, in its Camp development program.

With so many attractive features of climate, recreational facilities, and business opportunities appealing not only to winter tourists, but also to those seeking a place for profitable living and/or comfortable and economical retirement, Florida has much to offer. With the congregations and facilities we have already established, the Church of the Brethren should aggressively and expectantly seek a growing future in the State."



## Chapter I

### CHURCH VENTURES

#### KEUKA AND HAWTHORN CHURCHES

11/27/1884.

In 1882 William Woodard and wife of Iowa moved to Florida, locating near Manatee but later moving to a farm about ten miles Southeast of Manatee. Here they remained raising oranges till 1900. After Elder C. D. Hylton located near the Hawthorn Church in 1896, he made a trip to St. Petersburg to find Sister Mohr and then went on south to visit Bro. and Sister Woodard. He held some meetings here but none were added to the Church so they decided that possibly the place was not suitable for building up a church. Several years later Brother Woodard and family moved to Fruitdale, Alabama then to Roanoke, Louisiana and later to Kinder where Brother Woodard died in the Summer of 1931 at the age of 82. His son John lived for sometime in Ohio, near New Carlisle.

Soon after their settlement in Florida, Bro. Woodard sent a communication to the Messenger at Mt. Morris, Ill. and it fell into the hands of the editor, J. H. Moore who wrote to him and secured some literature about Florida. Also, about this

time a prominent nursery man who had gone from Illinois to Putnam County, Fla. got in touch with Bro. Moore and their acquaintance led to his coming to Florida to look over his holdings with a view of settling there. In the latter part of Jan. 1884 Bro. Moore came to look over the proposition Mr. Mann had. From Palatka they went west to Mannville, arriving on Saturday evening and the following day Bro. Moore preached twice. No doubt these were the first sermons preached by a minister of the Church of the Brethren in the state of Florida.

When Brother Moore returned to his home in Mount Morris, he talked the matter over with his wife who was suffering with Tuberculosis and they decided that residence in a milder climate would be beneficial for her. Brother Moore at once resigned his position as managing editor of the Messenger and by the middle of March they were in Keuka, Florida. Besides the small store, Post Office and Depot there was a half-finished house by the lake. Brother Moore, his wife and three children moved into it. The third day the children took down with the measles. No services were held on this first Sunday but on the second Sunday Bro. Moore called all the surrounding people together at the Depot and a Sunday School was organized, the first Sunday School in Florida by the Church of the Brethren. About one-fourth mile from the Depot on the southside of the lake, Brother Moore selected a site for their home and a house was soon

erected and they moved into their permanent home.

After about six months Bro. John Teeter arrived from Mount Morris. Being a merchant he brought his goods along and opened up a store. Brethren Moore and Teeter talked the matter over about building a house of worship and each pledged half toward the erection and cost. So with some help from the North, a house was soon ready for use and the Sunday School was moved into it. Since there was no school house in the village, the church house was used for day school five days a week and for Sunday School and Preaching on Sunday. Miss Libbie Swank was the teacher of the day school. She and her sister had bought near the Moore home and brought their mother and brother with them from Pitsburg, Ohio. On November 27, 1884 they met together and organized a church of the Brethren in the Sunshine State. The first Love Feast to be held in it was January 29, 1885. There were forty-five members around the tables and nine of them were ministers. Eld. S. T. Bosserman officiated at the Feast. Soon the membership had grown to fifty in this organization.

Another group of members settled near Hawthorn, about sixteen miles west by rail but only twelve miles thru the woods. In this new location the land was more fertile and more homes were in the settlement. Among the ministers to move here to labor in the Lord's work was J. C. Layman of Franklin Grove, Ill. Also, a Brother B. F. Bowser,

tho he soon passed away and was laid to rest (his grave being the first grave of a Brethren Minister) Also, Brother J. F. Hoke lived here and at Keuka at different times. In these times Brother Andrew Hutchinson held meetings in both congregations. Because of his familiarity with the scripture he was called the "Walking Bible."

The house of worship for the members at Hawthorn was possibly built in the early nineties and was named the Pine Grove Church. The Sunday School and Preaching continued thruout the year but were not so well attended during the Summer but when the tourists returned in the Autumn it was built up again. Among the tourists was an elder by the name of T. C. Denton of Cloverdale, Va. who rendered much assistance. A number united with the churches at different times, principally young people and were baptized in the lake beside the church in Keuka. About this time Brother Moore took a job with the nursery near Waycross, Georgia to replenish his finances. He remained with them two years before returning to Keuka. About this time or after seven years in the South, Bro. Moore was recalled to Mt. Morris to help out on the Messenger Staff. This move necessitated having another Overseer for the Church so Bro. F. W. Dove was called to Keuka from Tenn. to help ordain one. Bro. E. J. Neher was ordained and given charge of the work of the two churches and he did it efficiently.

In the early part of March 1895 when the trees



were in fine shape and full of sap, there came a cold wave and froze ninety-five percent of the citrus trees to the ground. A like freeze came two years later. Many of the people from the North gave up and went back home to live and that meant our people at Keuka and Hawthorn too. Brethren J. F. Hoke and J. I. Miller and families went to Louisiana. Also, the Elder, E. J. Neher left about the first of the year 1897. Eld. C. D. Hylton, who had been spending a year in Evangelistic work in Louisiana moved to Hawthorn, Nov. 27, 1896 to see what could be done among the scattered members. On April 10, 1897 an election was held for minister and the lot fell on David E. Sower. At this time the General Mission Board directed Bro. Hylton to look up all the groups of members in the State, hence he went to Manatee County as mentioned above and also to Wabasso in the Indian River neighborhood.

On May 6, 1899 Bro. Hylton installed J. N. Overhultz into the Ministry. After more than two years in the State, Bro. and Sister Hylton moved back to Virginia and the work was left in the hands of the young ministers. Bro. A. B. Barnhart was sent to Keuka to ordain Brother J. N. Overhultz to the eldership. With Bro. D. E. Sower to help him, Bro. Overhultz undertook the job of holding the workers together and to build up a strong church again but the task was too great for the young men in the ministry. About 1905 or the year following the church house at Hawthorn was sold and the



money deposited with the General Mission Board. This money was paid back to the Florida Mission work in 1926. After the members had all moved from Keuka, no services were held in the church by the lake. In 1926 some of the citizens of the community purchased the house for a Community Church. The sale was made and the deed delivered to the new owners during the year 1928 and the funds turned to the Mission Board Treasurer for the work of the District.

### THE INDIAN RIVER CHURCH

4/22/1898

The Yearbook of 1897 gives the address of J. R. Leatherman at Woodley Florida. A bit later I. W. Leatherman was in the same community. From the memories of Sister Mary Leatherman and Elder C. D. Hylton, the following is put together as the history of the work.

Brother Hylton said he made two or three trips there under the direction of the General Mission Board. With the assistance of Elder Samuel Eby he organized the Church, April 22, 1898, with seventeen (17) members. The next day five were baptized and then the third day another was baptized. One year later Brother Hylton held a ten-day meeting for them. At this time the Indian River Church was the most southern organization in the Fraternity in the United States.

Sister Leatherman gives the names of the mem-

bers that made up the organization: Mr. and Mrs. Gifford and two children; Mr. and Mrs. Wigfield and three daughters; Mr. and Mrs. Stuff; Ruby Gifford; Mr. and Mrs. King; Mary, Jessie, Sallie, Sadie, Lucy, Isaac W. and J. R. Leatherman. The organization lasted but a bit more than a year. Other members moved into the community but had no organized church nor did they form one. In the early thirties, the District man visited there several times among the ones that were still there: Sister Alice Eby; Brother and Sister C. S. Beers; the E. E. Smith family; one of the Wigfield girls. Elder Samuel Eby had passed to the beyond several years before and Sister Beers passed away in 1932.

## Chapter II

### CHURCH PIONEERS

#### THE TAMPA (ZION) CHURCH

2/15/1912

Bro. J. V. Felthouse and wife moved to Florida (near Seminole) from Logansport, Indiana in the year 1911. Also some other members had located in other parts of Hillsborough and Pinellas counties to make their homes. These new people soon began talking about an organized church to include these scattered members. A meeting was called at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. McKillip on February 15, 1912. Eld. Geo. A. Branscomb of N. Carolina called the meeting to order and conducted the devotions. Eld. P. J. Blough was chosen for moderator. The church was organized with 12 charter members. At this same meeting a choice was held for deacon and Isaac Cripe was chosen. He and his wife were duly installed. Also, Bro. Abram Buck was chosen for the presiding elder. Soon after the organization a meeting was held and six were baptized, among which were J. H. McKillip and wife and her sister, Cora Cripe. Two days after the organization a Communion Service was held at the same place. Another Communion Service was held two years later on April 3, 1914, at which a number of visitors

were present, Eld. J. H. Moore, Bro. S. B. Katherman, Bro. Eli Cassel, Bro. Joseph Prellis, Bro. B. F. Lightner, Bro. William Borough, and sisters Borough, Lydia and Minnie Wright. The J. H. McKillip home was the meeting place for five years. Many occasional meetings were held at the J. V. Felthouse home and possibly some of the regular ones, for the organization had no house of worship and did not have till after the mid-twenties. When the church was organized Bro. Felthouse was no Elder but was ordained Jan. 4, 1913. Sometime after this ordination, Bro. Felthouse was chosen the presiding elder and continued in that office till his death October 28, 1925. At the December Business Meeting, Bro. Garst was chosen to direct the work of this Zion Church as its Elder. A custom grew up in the group to meet for a Missionary meeting and a Communion at Thanksgiving time each year and it was continued till they had a Church House.

Early in 1926 Mrs. Viola May and Mrs. Roberts began getting their children into the May home on Sundays for a Sunday School. During the Summer the attendance grew and in December Brethren S. M. Miller and J. H. Morris held some meetings in this home and twelve of the scholars were converted and became members of the Church. The matter of building a house of worship became imperative. About this time Brethren Garst and Morris met Ralph Cottrell in Tampa and thru his liberality two lots were paid for in the Hamner Subdivision and donated to the Tampa Church.



Since this North-Tampa location was between the two groups of members, the decision was made to build on them. One of the Building Committee, Bro. Haney had received a hundred dollar check for a Christmas present and he turned it over as a beginning for the church. Later checks from J. F. Sanger and J. H. Garst of Sebring and sister Felthouse at Seminole and the work was on the way. Lumber was bought and work was donated by the carpenters at Sebring and Brooksville and soon the house was under roof. The restrictions placed on it by the Hamner Organization caused the Brethren to build much larger than their best judgment told them was necessary and of course increased the cost of construction. Thru the donated work, the untiring efforts of the Tampa members and especially the solicitation among the northern friends of Bro. Haney, the house was finished without a debt. Brethren A. O. Haney, Harvey Landis, John Rigler, Wm. Lind, G. B. Landis and others continued till the work was fully finished. It was dedicated later with Elder J. H. Garst conducting the dedication service.

Late in 1926 Bro. H. M. Landis and wife and two sons came to the Sunny South to make their homes. After a few days in Sebring they came to East Tampa and stayed a short time in the May home and then moved to the shores of Lake Magdalene in North Tampa. From here it was easy to get to the work at the Church. Soon after Bro. and Sister Landis had located permanently in Tampa,



the Church took steps to license him to preach. In this open field of opportunity they began working and growing in the ministry. While not called definitely to be the Pastor, yet he did the work of an efficient Pastor for the church in Tampa from the very beginning of his ministry.

After the church in North Tampa was finished, arrangements were made between the two groups to have Sunday School and preaching in the morning in North Tampa and the same in East Tampa in the evening, so that Bro. Landis could preach at both places each Sunday. Some of the Brethren used their autos to bring people to the Sunday School from Citrus Park. Several of these people later became members of the Church. During 1927 a D.V.B.S. was held in the North Tampa church with good interest and attendance. Besides the home workers they had the help of Bertha Albin and Cora Cripe. By the year 1928 the membership had grown to 49 and among them a number of able workers so they invited the District Gatherings to come there in 1929. The meetings were well cared for in the commodious house near Goldstein. After all money matters had been settled up, the surplus from the sale of meals was turned over to the Mission Board to be used in the District. This custom was followed for several years afterwards.

The Depression of 1929 and the following years were disastrous to Real Estate developments and the Hamner Subdivision was no exception and

they did not get the water and Electricity to the Goldstein area. The houses that would have been built were not and no new people came in and many of the others were scared away, till the neighborhood began to grow up in weeds and prospective roads were closed or never opened. The Brethren could see no future for the work, so after six years of work here it was abandoned and the house was sold to prevent it being destroyed by marauders. All the religious interests were now transferred to the Mission in East Tampa which gave it new life and it began to grow. Lois Lauver and her mother had moved to this part of Tampa in 1930 and was doing much among the children of the neighborhood. Later Philip and Mary Lou took up their residence in the same neighborhood. During the year 1933 Brother Harvey M. Landis was ordained to the full ministry and Philip was re-licensed. The way was opening for more and better work for the Church in the city of Tampa.

In the Spring of 1933 Brother Ullery purchased some lots on Twentieth Street in East Tampa and donated them to the church on which to build a house of worship. During the Summer and Fall a house was erected to be ready for use the next year, 1934. The sermon of dedication was delivered by Eld. A. D. Crist. To furnish some much-needed room an addition was put to the building during 1935. The members called for the District Gatherings in 1936 and the wish was granted. Since the church was small and inadequate to care for the

many large sessions, the Oak Park Holiness Church thru its pastor, Rev. Bush offered their commodious building to be used. Many of the sessions were held in the Holiness Church and all appreciated the larger quarters. The Committee on Resolutions tendered the thanks of the District Meeting to them for the kindness shown. At this time Bro. A. D. Crist was the Presiding Elder and one year later was chosen for Pastor and served till 1952. On Dec. 5, 1939 mother Felthouse passed away after twenty-seven years as a member of this same congregation, being the last of the charter members in the State. The burning passion of her life was to inculcate into minds the Word of God and thus spread Spirituality in the churches and homes in the District of Florida and Georgia.

For a number of years the Tampa church was served by a Free Ministry but in 1938 Brother A. D. Crist was called to be their Pastor and he served till 1952. Again in 1941 the District Meeting was cared for by the members of the Tampa Church. As usual the work was well done and much appreciated by all that attended. Besides the free help in the Ministry by Brethren Harvey M. Landis and Philip Lauver, resident ministers the church had much help from tourist ministers, as Elder J. Kurtz Miller, Brother Ullery and Brother J. F. Graybill. In 1948 Brother Graybill became Assistant Pastor and continued in that position till he had to go with his wife to Neffsville, Pa. on account of her physical condition. By the losing

of the help of Sister Felthouse, Sisters Mary Lauver, Viola May and Boomer and the moving away of Bro. and Sister Landis, Bro. and Sister Philip Lauver and the going of Bro. and Sister Graybill, a vacancy is left that never will be filled again. There are a number of good workers left who will do the best they can but the load is much more than they can carry.

### CLAY COUNTY CHURCH

3/15/1914

December 7, 1912 Brethren A. M. Eastwood and A. D. Crist arrived in Florida at Jacksonville. Bro. Eastwood sent back for his wife and daughter to come to Florida. Bro. Crist went back to Kansas and in about ten months he and his family moved to Florida. Among others who came were William Brunk, C. D. Fager and family, Eld. I. H. Crist and wife and A. L. Marchand and wife. The first Sunday School in which any took part was at the Hatcher School house where Bro. Eastwood was one of the teachers and was sometimes called on to preach for them. Thru acquaintance of some of the young people near Rideout School house a Christian Workers' meeting was organized. Interest grew there and the whole group took up the work and it became a regular appointment and opened the way to the Sunday School and the church later.

It so happened that Bro. J. H. Moore and his



wife were spending a few months at Eustis during the Spring of 1914 so he was called to Clay County to assist in the organization of these members into a Church. The little meeting was held in what was intended to be an-up-to-date chicken house but at this time was occupied by the owner and family till their house could be built. The charter members were A. M. Eastwood and wife, Eld. A. D. Crist and wife, C. D. Fager, wife and two daughters, A. L. Marchand and wife, William Brunk and Howard Sell. This organization was effected March 15, 1914. The new organization chose Bro. Crist as the presiding elder and so continued for nine years.

During the first nine months the services were held in the K. P. Hall in Middleburg. Also the first series of meetings were held in Middleburg with Bro. Isaac Frantz doing the preaching. During the latter half of 1916 a church house was built and dedicated in January 1917. During the Spring of 1916 Bro. B. F. Honeyman of Dayton, Ohio held some meetings in which ten were received into the Church by baptism. Eld. I. H. Crist preached the sermon of dedication and just a short time after the dedication he held some meetings in the new house. As a direct result nine were received into the Church thru baptism. The new group felt the need of more help in the deacon's office and the call fell to D. E. Baxley and wife, who were chosen and installed on Jan. 18, 1917.

When Elder A. D. Crist returned to Kansas in

1923, his father Isaac Crist took the oversight of the Church. At the Business Meeting June 25, 1923, Bro. and Sister J. E. Jenkins were called to the office of Deacon. When Bro. Crist returned in 1925, he again took the oversight of the Church work. From the Council a call was sent to the District Meeting at Arcadia for the District Gatherings of 1926 to be held in the Clay County Church and the request was granted. During the Summer, in preparation for these meetings, the church house was repaired and repainted. During these meetings Eld. Isaac H. Crist added much to the work by his help and guidance. Physically he was not very strong any more but Spiritually he was keen and active. Early in 1928 he passed to his reward and in Elders' Meeting at the Sebring Church the following were passed: "His wise counsel and far-seeing vision were constant helpers in directing the work of the field. He was tireless in his work for the Lord. He did most of his work without compensation while he was always helping others with his means. His loyalty and liberality were outstanding characteristics in his long and useful life." A short time after the Meetings here the road by the church was hard-surfaced, thus making it one of the main roads in the County. It now became easy to get to the church from Jacksonville, Middleburg and Doctor's Inlet.

At the District Meeting in 1930 one of the first matters of business for the Elders was to consider resolutions to the bereaved families of Elders I.

C. Johnson and D. H. Zigler, both having passed away during the year. As at the previous meetings the members and friends served the delegates and visitors in an acceptable way and all were happy and ready to commend them for the tireless service. Since the Ministerial Board had licensed Bro. Walter Fisher to the Ministry in 1928 he had been helping here, but when the Mission was started at Glenside and had been organized into a Church in 1929 he was classed there with Brother Bowman which left only Bro. A. D. Crist and Bro. H. B. Layman in the mother church in Clay County. After Brethren A. D. Bowman and Walter Fisher had been lettered out of the Glenside Church the whole work of both churches fell on the shoulders of the Brethren Crist and Layman, who promised to do their best. From 1934 on much help was given them in the form of committees and from the Ministerial Board but when all efforts to build up the work failed, the church was disorganized and the remaining members given letters.

The work in Clay County moved along in a healthy way thru the Free Ministry of Brethren Crist and Layman but when Bro. Crist accepted the call to the Tampa Church the burden was increased on Bro. Layman but he continued his faithful service as long as he remained in the District of Florida and Georgia. Since there was no resident minister in the congregation the congregation had to depend on outside help and Summer Pastors. Brother Joseph May did good work dur-

ing the Summer of 1946. Brother Norman McLean has helped much when he is home from Toccoa Falls Institute. A note from the Minutes of 1948 says that Eld. J. D. Reish had been installed as Pastor of the church, October 19, 1947. He served in this capacity till his going to the Hospital in his last illness.

A number of workers who had been living in Jacksonville had been coming out regularly to the services and others who lived in the community but worked in the city attended regularly but when the Mission was opened in the city attended there and affected the Sunday School and preaching services as can easily be seen. These Missionary projects deplete the mother church sometimes but they build up a new Place and that usually pays off.

### THE ARCADIA CHURCH

5/15/1914

During the Winter and Spring of 1914 some members moved into the town of Arcadia and soon sent word to Bro. Geo. A. Branscomb in North Carolina that they desired an organization in this new location and it was effected May 15, 1914. The charter members were: Brethren Wm. Borough and wife, J. W. Leatherman, C. H. Slifer, Isaac L. Herren, J. B. Wine, Michael Wine with Sisters Myrtle Brown, Beulah Brown and Martha Miller, ten in all. As the Summer passed the membership melted away and by autumn only a few could be



located. Elder S. W. Bail with his wife and son Gayman came to the rescue and began the work in real earnest. In an article in the Messenger of Oct. 13, 1934, Bro. J. H. Moore writes: "It so happened about eight months after we located at Keuka in 1884 there came a Bro. Bail and wife from Penn'a. and purchased the Lake View Hotel, just erected. They made it a real homelike resort for the visiting members. In the family was a tall young man whom we soon learned to know as Sam Bail. After spending some thirty years in the North, part of it in school work, then on the farm and some in Pastoral work, in 1914 returned to Florida to help replant the Brethren Standard in the Sunshine State.

Besides Bro. Bail, Brother D. B. Weaver was associated with these members after the first of the year 1915. The new church house was completed in Feb. 1915. There was no formal dedication service but work began at once by having a series of meetings with Bro. Isaac Frantz as the evangelist. During the meetings seven or eight were converted, among them Bro. Slifer's wife. The trustees for the new organization were Brethren S. W. Bail, C. H. Slifer and D. B. Weaver with Bro. Branscomb as Presiding Elder. At the Business Meeting in Feb. 1916 a call was made for the next District Meeting but the request was turned down. At this time Brother S. P. Weaver moved into the congregation and served as Pastor.

Bro. J. W. Chambers moved into the congre-

gation in the Spring of 1917. During the time he and his family lived there, Bro. Chambers served as Pastor of the church. Bro. La Rue Sellers was a member of the congregation for some time and served as Pastor a part or all of that time. Brother J. I. Thomas has lived in the congregation at two different times and has served the church as Pastor both times, about two years all together. Records show that Bro. Branscomb served as Presiding Elder for sometime and that Eld. A. Conner was chosen about the close of 1917. The next record of the Overseer was Eld. J. H. Garst who served till the close of 1928. Brother S. W. Bail spent part of his time in Florida and part of it in the North. During the time he was in his Florida home he served several times as Pastor of the Arcadia church. At one of the Protracted meetings, Eld. J. W. Hamilton did the evangelistic preaching; At another Elder C. D. Hylton held the Word forth with exceptional power. At a Business Meeting in 1921 Brethren H. H. Westheaffer, J. W. Moriarty and Chas. L. Trump were chosen to the deacon's office and were duly installed.

At the District Meeting of N. and S. Carolina, Georgia and Florida, held at Sebring in 1924, tentative plans were made for the division of the District into two, making Florida and Georgia a separate District. The Annual Meeting confirmed this work by approving the work that was done here and the New District could have all its own meetings and carry on its own work. Arcadia was chosen

to entertain the District meeting of 1925. The feeding and entertaining the people who came to the meetings were well cared for by the members of the church and the friends of the community. Much planning and many decisions had to be made in manning the new district with leaders to carry on the work that needed to be done in building up a strong work in this Southland. During the Elders' Meeting a Message was read saying that Eld. J. V. Felthouse had passed away as the result of a snake bite by a Diamond Rattler.

From the organization of the New District of Florida and Georgia to the present time the membership at Arcadia has held almost regularly at forty. Frequently a Revival Meeting was held and the membership arose but then moving day or some other change came and the number dropped down to the average or lower.

As noted before the three Presiding Elders but the rest of the time it was mostly cared for by the Elders in the Sebring Church. After 1928 Elder J. W. Rogers, Elder H. A. Spanogle, and Elder Irvin R. Pletcher with short periods by Bro. Bail, Bro. C. L. Trump and Bro. A. D. Crist who was serving as pastor of the Tampa Church. During the thirty-two years that Brother Bail lived in and around Arcadia, he served many times as Pastor which adds up to several years but since his death in 1946 the work has been cared for by Sister Bail and several others for a Summer or as Bro. B. F. Long for a longer time. From the Resolutions

of 1946, may be quoted the following words: "We feel keenly the loss sustained by the death of Eld. S. W. Bail who for more than thirty years gave himself generously to the Church. We trust that his many activities may bear fruit thru the years to come." A word of commendation may be due for the way the District Gatherings were cared for by the membership and friends in and around Arcadia at each of the three times they were held in that congregation. The dates of the Meetings were 1925, 1946 and 1936. The Resolutions show rather a strange coincidence: A resolution about the death of Eld. J. V. Felthouse who was bitten by a Diamond Rattler while the meetings were in session; A Resolution to Elder J. H. Moore who had passed away during the year, at the 1936 Meeting; A Resolution about the death of Elder S. W. Bail who had passed away during the year at the 1946 Meeting.

### SENECA CHURCH

2/13/1915

During the days of expansion in Florida, shortly before the Big Freeze of 1895, a prosperous community grew up near Lake Seneca. To provide for the religious needs of the group the Presbyterians built a house to be used for a Community Church. It was a good house costing approximately two thousand dollars at that time. It had a bell that was the pride of the Community for its tones could



be heard for miles around. After the Big Freeze of '95 the discouraged people left the community, some even did not take their furniture. The place was almost depopulated. No longer did the great bell call them to worship. The bell disappeared and the house deteriorated. In 1912 when Eld. J. C. Funderburg and family moved into the community and bought the Bay State Grove, he began to look around for a place to worship and found this abandoned Church and he purchased it for seventy-five dollars (\$75). Some much needed repairs were made and it began to be used for worship. The son, I. V. Funderburg preached the first sermon in the repaired house. Before long Bro. I. V. and family went back to California to continue his school work but his brother Truman remained with his father and mother to care for their holdings and church work in Florida.

Quoting from Bro. Moore's article in the Messenger of October 20, 1934: "The day before Christmas 1914 myself and wife reached Eustis, where we spent the rest of the Winter. Also, early in October of 1915 we located in the city and made this our home for six months. During the nine months, I preached at Seneca nearly every Sunday . . . . Seven miles was too far to walk, so twice each month I paid a livery man two dollars a trip to take me out to the place of worship and bring me back. Sometimes my wife accompanied me on the trip but the roads were not in good shape and the riding a bit rough. A few times the trip was made

in a livery rig. You see the four dollars I paid was my salary reversed. Bro. Funderburg cared for my expenses the rest of the time. The plan made no burden on the people but was a bit hard on the preacher.

A Church was organized at Seneca February 13, 1915 with sixteen members (16). Brother J. C. Funderburg was chosen to be the Presiding Elder. Since Bro. Ira W. Miller was the only deacon, a choice was held and Charles O. Firestone and Roy M. Price were called to assist in that work. They with their wives were duly installed. Two months later at a Business Meeting, Bro. and Sister Funderburg gave the members a deed for the church house and the acre of ground, specifying that it was given to the Lord's Cause in the State of Florida. A vote of thanks was tendered them by the audience. In April 1916 Bro. and Sister Moore left Eustis to help in the Sebring work. Their leaving put a heavier burden on Bro. Funderburg and his helpers to care for the work in and around Seneca. From that time on Bro. and Sister Moore made their home in the town of Sebring.

Moving day to all the churches in Florida as well as in other States and when the membership is small it almost depopulates them. Letters were granted to several, including some of the charter members. Besides the letters granted, some difficulties in the Church almost rooted out the branch that had been planted and growing here. After Bro. Funderburg had gone back to California, Bro.

Leedy was chosen as Overseer. He served for a short time and then the Mission Board of the District asked Bro. A. Branscomb to act as Elder. He held the office till the Fall of 1920 when Bro. J. W. Myer moved into the congregation from Penn'a. and became the Overseer. After a short absence in 1923, Bro. Myer returned and in 1924 he was again chosen to direct and care for the work. In 1928 James H. Morris was chosen and continued till 1934 and Bro. C. E. Bower became Overseer and continued till 1942 when Bro. James Richards was chosen and served for a short time. Bro. Bower was again chosen and served till the disorganization of the Church. Letters were granted to the few members around Eustis and Leesburg to be put into the nearest organization.

After a lull of six or seven years a new wave of enthusiasm sent many people to Florida and among them many of our members. The resulting Real Estate boom only increased that number and some of them located in the already established churches, like Seneca. Following the Boom, the Depression sent them away again and the Churches were smaller. The exodus did not hurt Seneca so badly because Brother J. W. Rogers had held a Revival Meeting in the Fall of 1927 and had added sixteen members to the group, most of them permanent residents of Florida. Another thing that helped to hold up the interest at Seneca was the Life Conferences that were held about Christmas each year. These Annual Gatherings brought together the

members of the District besides some Northern people for this short period, such as Missionaries, College Teachers, Secretaries from Elgin and Bible Teachers. Also, to care for these meetings necessitated keeping the church and grounds in repair besides adding new things for the convenience and comfort of the ones who would attend. Besides the repair work, Brother Miller bought the Square House and allowed it to be used for Sleeping Quarters for the attendants.

The Seneca neighborhood was not only the home of the Life Conference but six or seven sessions of the Summer Camps were held here before Camp Ithiel was built up and fitted for the Summer Camps. Though many of the members moved away and some dropped by the wayside of indifference, yet the regular services were kept up. Since there was no minister in the congregation, the services were in the hands of Brethren Bower and Richards at Winter Park. Efforts to hold up the work were continued as long as any hope of building up the work. When the services were discontinued the sixty-year old house of worship was moved to the Camp near Gotha and put in shape for the use of the Gatherings that came there to use the Camp and its facilities

#### *The Log Cabin Sunday School*

Because Bro. and Sister D. M. Snowberger lived so far from Seneca Church and could not get there many times, the members at Seneca would



take well-filled baskets and go to spend a Special hour and have Sunday School with them. About the beginning of 1929 a Sunday School was organized in the Snowberger home and it met regularly. At first only a few members lived in the immediate community but neighbors attended the Sunday School and there were several tourist members in the nearby community who attended regularly. Soon after the work began a man that lived in the community asked to have some one come to baptize him. It was attended to immediately and he became a loyal worker with the rest.

After Elder J. W. Myer and family moved into the community, the matter of more room became acute and they planned a building for the Sunday School and Preaching Services. On Bro. Snowbergers land along the Highway a log cabin was built for a meeting place for this new Sunday School. Besides the Sunday School a preaching service was conducted regularly by Bro. Myer and others bringing the message. Much of the time Bro. Snowberger superintendent of the school, but during the years 1936 to 1938 Bro. Harold Myer performed the duties of Supt. During the Summer of 1938 the Ministerial Board met with the Church and licensed Harold to the Ministry. Brother Harold assisted in the preaching at the Log Cabin for some time and then he changed his Church home and began preaching for the Assembly of God.

For a long time this Sunday School was one of our best small schools in giving to expenses and

also to Missions. The annual offering ran as high as \$87.08. Of that amount more than forty dollars went for Missions. The enrollment kept growing till in 1941 it reached 35. Tho the work is closed and the house sold, the good that comes from the Bible messages will be manifest for years. The children that were gathered in from the community and taught will make better men and women as a result of that work in the Log Cabin Sunday School.

### THE SEBRING CHURCH

12/12/1916

The work at Sebring began in January of the year 1915 when Brethren J. H. Garst and G. E. Kinzie came over from St. Petersburg and purchased property in the Geo. E. Sebring development project. In their discussion with Mr. Sebring he promised to give a lot for a church and other substantial aid. Elder J. H. Moore and wife were spending the winter at Eustis and were persuaded to look the proposition over. Being pleased with the plans and offers of Mr. Sebring, they decided to locate in the new town. They moved from Eustis to Sebring in April 1916 and the first work they had to do was to erect a cottage on their newly acquired lot in this new development. Plans having been made during the Summer for a house of worship to be built on the lot donated by Mr. Sebring, the house was erected during the Fall. The house was built

on the bungalow style and was twenty-eight by thirty-two feet.

During the Fall members began coming from the North and among them were Prof. A. M. Stout and wife from N. Manchester, Ind. The first service in Sebring was held in the home of Bro. and Sister Moore on Nov. fifth. In the afternoon of Dec. 3rd a song service was held in the new Chapel which was practically finished. In the evening of Dec. 12, 1916, the members assembled and effected an organization with fourteen members: Elders J. H. Moore and wife, J. H. Garst and wife, Riley Peters and wife, Deacons J. H. Kimmel and wife, E. M. Cottrell and wife, Taylor Arnold and wife, and Prof. A. M. Stout and wife, being fourteen in all. Later Bro. J. W. Lutz and wife came and are sometimes thot of as charter members, tho they were not at the organization. It was decided that the elders serve jointly with Bro. Stout as Church Clerk. The dedication service was held Dec. 17 at two-thirty with Bro. Moore in charge. The offering was \$334 and was sufficient to meet all indebtedness and some left over. By the end of the tourist year, the membership had increased to thirty with about that many tourists.

On Jan. 4, 1917 the first Prayer Meeting was held, with twenty present. On Sunday Jan. 7, the first Sunday School was held with about forty present with Bro. A. M. Stout acting as Supt. Jan. 11 Bro. Eli Cottrell called for and was anointed. He passed away Feb. 3rd and was taken back to

Indiana for burial. During the Winter some of the Brethren erected dwellings and others purchased property with the intent of making Sebring their home. By the middle of May all had returned to their homes in the North, leaving Bro. and Sister Moore entirely alone for the Summer, so public services were suspended and this happened for the next two Summers. On many Sundays Bro. and Sister Moore had private services in the Chapel. In the Fall the members returned in larger numbers and the services were resumed with the Chapel packed, Sunday after Sunday. With the added attendance, it soon became necessary to add some Sunday School rooms, to care for the people who came to worship on Poinsetta Avenue.

During the first part of 1917-'18 the first Revival was held with Eld. J. A. Dove in charge of the preaching. At the same time a Bible Institute was being conducted by Eld. A. C. Wieand. This custom of having these Northern Brethren help out during the Winter season continued for a long time in this as well as in some of the other churches in this Southland. On Feb. 9th the first Love Feast was held in Sebring with Bro. Wieand in charge. There were about sixty at the Communion tables. During the year of 1919-'20 the Chapel was moved to the corner of Oak and Pine Streets. Services continued thruout the entire year since many of the Tourists had become Florida citizens, and lived in the city all the twelve months. About this time a small building was erected on the Oak Street side



of the Chapel to help care for the Sunday School and Kindergarten. This building soon became the kindergarten room in the community for Church and Private pupils. Some of the teachers were Sisters Nellie Kneisley, Leah Gettel and Anna Miller.

During the year 1921 the large commodious Auditorium was built to care for ever increasing crowds. Elder D. H. Zigler of Broadway, Va., preached the sermon of dedication on Jan. 8, 1922. In the large audience were seventeen ministers. The next problem to be solved was the matter of a parsonage and Brother J. F. Sanger came forward with a proposition: he would donate a house he owned on Pine Street if the Church would pay off a small debt on it. The deed and all legal matters were soon cared for and the house could now be furnished and ready for the in-coming pastor. The church secured the services of Bro. and Sister D. E. Miller for six months of the early part of 1924. On September 3, 1924 Elder James H. Morris and family moved into the newly decorated parsonage and remained there for four years, serving three years full time and one year half-time. Brother and Sister D. E. Miller were then installed to begin their second pastorate and they served till replaced by McKinley Coffman in December of the year 1938.

During the Summer of 1925 a need was felt for more room for the Young People's Sunday School Class. Also the Ladies' Aid needed more room to care for its work. The Young people came forward

as a body and with their own money and help made their room a reality, even furnishing it at their own expense. The Sister's aid did almost the same thing for their room and they soon had a homey place to work.

The Sunday School has always been a vital part of the work of this church. Soon after the church was organized, Prof. A. M. Stout was chosen to be the Supt. Others to follow and serve in that capacity were, Eld. J. H. Garst, Sister J. O. Younce, Brethren John Hollenberg, B. C. Whitmore, Sister Elsie Sanger (so long till she begged off), Sisters Mary Swank, Martha Horton, and Lena Marchand, on at least two different occasions. This list may not be complete but it shows their interest in the work among the children and the young people. During the Summer of 1925 the Pastor with his helpers conducted a very successful D.V.B.S. which opened the way for one the next and following years. It would not have been omitted in 1928 had not so many been away from Sebring. From 1929 to the present time many efforts were made and successful schools were held but most were Union Schools with one or more of the other churches in the city.

During the years of 1937 and early 1938 it became evident that more District work was needed to hold up and care for the many places that had been opened up. The Mission Board conceived the idea of asking the Sebring Church to share its Pastor with the District on a fifty-fifty basis. Elders H. M. Landis and J. H. Morris met with the Sebring

Church in May of 1938 and worked out a plan for such cooperation. In December of that year, Elder McKinley Coffman came to Florida to take up his two-fold work, pastoral and Executive Secretary work. His work began bearing fruit immediately for during the first nine months he was in each church one or more times in some regular or special work: eleven were baptized; three Summer Pastors had been brought to the District; he had assisted in Life Conference and in Summer Camps. In the next two years he was instrumental in more than one hundred being baptized. He directed the Summer Camps for the two years helped to arrange for Sister Ida C. Shoemaker's itinerary and for Walter M. Kahle to come for number of conferences. He closed out his work at the close of 1941 and the District felt the loss very keenly as expressed by the Board of Christian Education in its District report.

During the years of 1942 to 1944 the pastorate of the church was cared for by several of the local ministers: Elders H. A. Spanogle, F. M. Hollenberg, Edgar Stauffer and I. R. Pletcher. In the Fall of 1944 Brother D. D. Feishman came to Florida to give one-fourth of his time to District Work and three-fourths to Pastoral work of the Sebring Church. His meetings took him into six of the congregations of the District and resulted in thirty-four being brought into the fellowship of the Church thru baptism and renewal of vows. In his District work he served on the Mission Board and assisted

them in some of their projects of securing information about the possibilities and immediate needs of the District. He severed his relationship with the Board in March 1948. Elder H. B. Heisey was installed into his Pastoral work with the Sebring Church and began there September 1, 1948. The oversight of the Sebring Church has been held by Elders J. H. Moore and J. H. Garst jointly for thirteen years, or till the Church chose the Pastor, Eld. D. E. Miller in 1929. When Bro. McKinley Coffman became Pastor he was chosen as the Presiding Elder. Since 1941 the Overseers have been: Elder H. A. Spanogle, F. M. Hollenberg, C. E. Bower and Edgar Stauffer.

Lack of sufficient Sunday School room and the crowded conditions during the Winter season caused many persons in the congregation during the Winter season of 1947-'48 to feel the need of enlarged facilities in the Sebring congregation, hence in January 1948 a Building Committee was appointed. The members of the committee were: Elder Edgar Stauffer, Miss Katherine Rinehart, Mrs. Lena Marchand, John Hollenberg, William Hollinger, Mrs. Chalmer Barley, Frank Sargent, B. R. Ikenberry, C. O. Rogers, Eld. Harry Swank and J. D. Wampler. William J. Hines was selected and appointed to be the architect, with C. W. Whitmer as the contractor. The ground-breaking service was held July fifth and the cornerstone-laying was November twenty seventh 1948. The work went along with great rapidity and in less than two years the new



house of worship was ready for dedication. The congregation decided that it should be a Memorial Church to the two founders, Elders J. H. Moore and J. H. Garst. Elder Garst was consulted and he declined the honor of having his name used, hence the name of the church is: "The J. H. Moore Memorial Church of the Brethren." On January 22, 1950 the house was dedicated and it was fitting that Elder James M. Moore, the son of Elder J. H. Moore should preach the Sermon of Dedication.

Sebring holds a unique position among the churches of Florida because of its geographical position, near the center of them; because of its being the home of many of the older Brethren and Sisters; because Elder J. H. Moore spent the last twenty years of his life there; he had been instrumental in opening up the work in this Southland; he had helped so many churches get started in this new territory; he had directed our Religious thinking so long thru the columns of the Gospel Messenger; his quiet leadership helped to organize and build up all the older congregations. Also, Sebring was the home base for the work at the Grate Mills, the Sunday School at Hicoria, the work at Lake Istakpoga that grew into the Sunnyland Church, the work in the Bassenger neighborhood that grew into the Bassenger-Okeechobee church; all these with the J. H. Moore Church of the Brethren that is located in Sebring make the place almost a sacred spot to so many of our Brethren and Sisters.

From its small beginning on Poinsettia Street

in the twenty-eight by thirty-two house of worship to its towering Memorial Building on Oak and Pine Streets, is continual story of growth in attendance, problems and loyal leadership. Brother and Sister Moore could tell best the loneliness of the first three Summers when they were the only members to worship in the Chapel. In 1921 a large Auditorium was built, placing the Chapel Annex to it to care for the increasing attendance. The Sunday School attendance has grown till in 1952 the average was 209. The Morning Worship attendance now for the Winter Season is from four hundred to six hundred. The mid-week service has always been very high in comparison to membership and now the average is anywhere between fifty in Summer to two hundred during the Winter Season.

## Chapter III

### CHURCH EXTENSION

#### THE CHURCH AT CHOSEN

5/4/1922

Brother Isaac West was the merchant and Post Master in the little town of Chosen on the Southeast end of Lake Okeechobee. Some other members lived in the community, having moved there from Virginia or some other part of Florida. Among those coming from the Indian River Church were the Leatherman brothers, John R. and Isaac. After talking it over these Brethren thot it might be beneficial to organize so that they could have Sunday School and Preaching frequently. They met in the school house on May 4, 1922 and were organized into a body and took the name, "Chosen Church." There were ten letters making the number of Charter Members ten with a promise of two more later. Elder J. R. Leatherman was chosen to be the Overseer of the group. Some members died or moved away and they were not replaced by others coming in so the number got less and the work went down.

During the Winter of 1927-1928, Sister Bertha Albin of Kansas taught school in Chosen and did good work in the Sunday School in the same school

house. For more than a year the Sebring Church and the District Mission Board sent a minister about once a month to preach for them and the expenses were paid by the Church thru the efforts of Bro. and Sister West and Bertha Albin. As a result of the Tropical Storm of 1928 many people were drowned or made homeless and much property destroyed in the community. Among the buildings lost was the school house hence no place for school nor Sunday School. Since there seemed to be no hope of having a place for services nor of getting more members, a recommendation was made to disorganize the Church. During the six and one-half years of its existence, Bro. and Sister West did their best to build up the work but of no avail, it seemed. The few remaining members were given letters to put into a Church of the Brethren. Tho the work is closed, the good teaching that was done will bear fruit in some other community for God's Word will not return unto Him void.

### THE LAKELAND CHURCH

1/18/1925

Early in November of 1923 Brother John Leckrone and wife of Ohio moved to Lakeland, Fla. Other members living near were Brother Glenn Carr and family, who lived out about three miles. Eld. A. I. Mow and wife lived at Homeland, about twenty-two miles to the south. Also A. H. Price and wife lived near Homeland. The first meeting



was held in Bro. Carr's home in Sept. 1924. A few meetings were held in the home of Eld. and Mrs. A. I. Mow and then they were transferred to the Leckrone garage on Dorothy Street. For the winter of 1924-1925 Brethren E. S. Hollinger and family and Chester Bookwalter and family were in Lakeland and worshiped with the members in this garage. On August 24, 1924 a Love Feast was held here with twenty-three taking part. Some of the group were from the Zion Church and the others lived around Lakeland. Elder J. H. Moore officiated at the service. The members in and around Lakeland were organized into a Church Jan. 18, 1925 with 15 charter members and Elder J. W. Rogers for the Overseer. On January 31st a Sunday School was organized. During the year at a Business Meeting the letters of Miles Hamilton and wife were received and before the end of the year the number of members had grown to twenty.

After many offers and opportunities to secure lots on which to build a house of worship, finally two lots were secured one mile west of the Post Office on the Old Tampa Trail. Being located between the city and the suburbs was unfortunate for the place did not settle up readily and the house was away from the people. Work began immediately and it was pushed along rapidly and in fourteen months after the organization the house was ready for use. The Dedication Services were conducted March 21, 1926 with Eld. D. H. Zigler in

charge and he continued preaching for a week. His master messages were appreciated by all who heard him. The membership kept growing till the number reached 35. But moving day came to this group too and when two of the largest families had moved away the crowds looked rather small. A few others moved in and two letters from Ft. Lauderdale brought the number of members back to twenty-five (25) again.

At a Business Meeting held May 16, 1926, Bro. and Sister Glenn Carr were ordained to the Eldership. At a later Business Meeting, one held October 1, 1927 Bro. and Sister John S. Leckrone were called to the office of the Deacon and duly installed. Thru a later Business Meeting the Church issued a Call for the Annual Meeting to come to the Florida and Georgia District in 1930. The Call was sanctioned by the District thru the District Meeting being held at the Clay County Church. The call was renewed the following year and sent to the Conference at La Verne, Cal., for the next Annual Conference. Besides the member on Standing Committee Bro. and Sister Leckrone went to the Meeting. Two other Revival Meetings were held in the new church besides the one by Bro. D. H. Zigler. These were held by Brethren L. L. Lininger and J. H. Morris. The church has had many Communion Services, especially in its early history, having one each year. Many programs and Special Services were held, having service and then having lunch and a Social hour.

Although the membership was not large, yet they felt that they could care for the District Gatherings in 1933, so they sent a Call to the Meeting that was being held at Lorida and it was considered favorably, and the Meetings were allowed to go to Lakeland. Since the church house was small and away from most of the homes of the members, they arranged with the School Board to use the facilities at the Central School in the city proper. In some sort of coincidence this school house is but a short distance from where the first services were held in the garage on Dorothy Street. From the Resolutions, we quote: "We wish to express to the city of Lakeland, her School Board, her Trustees and the Faculty of Central School our sincerest gratitude for the royal welcome extended to us and the free use of the buildings that housed so well our District Gatherings."

After the District Meeting of 1933, a number of members moved into the bounds of the congregation and the membership list almost doubled in the next few years. More strenuous efforts were put forth to build up the work by the resident membership as well as by the help the Boards could give, but the location was a great drawback. An effort was made by some to have the house moved to where more of the members lived but the move was never made and when moving day came again, what were left decided to sell the house and take their letters to some other congregation of the Church of the Brethren. The house was sold for

five hundred dollars (\$500) on March 12, 1943.

During the eighteen years of its existence it had for its Presiding Elders, Brethren J. W. Rogers, J. H. Garst, J. H. Morris, S. W. Bail, the Ministerial Board, S. G. Fahnstock, and Clarence Bower. Most of the time it had no resident Elder nor Pastor but was supplied from other congregations. Tho the organization is dissolved, the house sold and the members gone otherwheres to live, the much seed that was sown thru the Word of God that was preached will continue to bear fruit and some people will make many right decisions because of their association with the work at Lakeland.

### WINTER PARK CHURCH

2/15/1925

About 1920 some members moved into North Florida and organized a Sunday School in Madison County. Before very long they moved back into Jefferson Davis County, Ga., and there were organized into a Church. The number grew to about 20 members here in Georgia. Before long some of them moved south into Florida, locating near Winter Park. In 1923 four families met in the home of Bro. H. F. Ellis and held their first service with thirteen in attendance. Other meetings were held in other homes, the attendance being larger each time. A Sunday School was organized March 23, 1924 with Bro. H. F. Ellis as Supt. On Easter Sunday the Services were held in the home of Bro.



J. W. Rogers with an attendance of twenty-five. An outing was enjoyed at Oakhurst May 25th. After partaking of a basket dinner, some time was spent in visiting and enjoying the beautiful surroundings. The services were held during the Summer in a vacant house owned by Bro. J. W. Rogers. A Sunday School and Sermon made up the morning service and the evening service consisted of a Bible Class, conducted by Bro. C. E. Bower. The mid-week services were mostly made up of hymn singing.

In September of 1924 they began holding services in the home of Bro. Jacob Ihrig. When the attendance outgrew the room, they began talking about building a church house. Bro. S. J. Burger was in the community and preached each Sunday, the attendance being about seventy or more each Sunday. In October Sister Maude Elis called for and was anointed. In December the ladies organized an Aid Society with Sisters Audrey Brown, Millie Rogers, Minnie Brallier and Iva Bower as officers. On January 19, 1925 work on the new church house was begun with the first service being held a week later. The new church was dedicated Feb. 15, 1925 and on the same day the Church was organized. The Dedication Sermon was preached by Eld. D. H. Zigler. After the sermon a basket dinner was served to 85 people, some being from Sebring and Seneca besides the tourists in and around the community. At a Business Meeting, Nov. 30, 1925, Brethren A. H.

Brallier and J. W. Rogers were called to the deacon's office and duly installed.

Early in 1925 a Christian Workers' Meeting was organized with Sisters Ruth Swihart, Hester Ihrig and Mildred Brallier as officers. The first revival meeting was conducted by Bro. S. J. Burger in March of 1925. On March 15 the first Communion Service was held with 48 taking part. The Young People's Class was organized soon after the Church was organized with Bro. Jacob Ihrig as teacher. There were eight members in the class. At its meetings it had duets, readings, stories, questions and other forms of religious work. Thru personal work and contests others were added to the class till the number reached twenty. The first program was rendered at the Sebring Church in June 1926. They continued till they had been in about all the churches of the District, one or more times.

When the first church house was built, it was with the understanding that the inside finishing would be done later and more rooms would be added to accommodate the growing congregation. In the getting ready to entertain the District Gatherings in 1927, the plans were carried out. A large Sunday School room was added on the east side and a kitchen on the rear of the present house. These rooms and the inside finishing were completed in time for the Meetings and were dedicated the evening before with James H. Morris preaching the sermon. Since the Sunday School Room could be opened into the main room, it proved to be

ample room for all the gatherings. The sisters cared for the culinary duties and proved to be good hostesses to satisfy the physical wants of the attendants. The open homes of the Brethren and neighbors of the community furnished sleeping places for all the delegates and outside visitors to the Conference.

Thru the kindness and money support of Dainiel Frantz and wife the daughter Bertha was allowed to give her valuable services to the District for about three years. Besides much District work she lived and worked at the Crate Mills and in the Winter Park Church. For two years, her work along with some other workers built up the Sunday School and added to the membership of the Church. When her time expired in May 1931 the Board was loath to let her go but money matters made it necessary. Her good work in the Church bore fruit for many years. The District Gatherings were granted to the congregation for 1934 and were ably cared for as at other times.

Early in 1935 when the Will of Mr. William Coursen was probated, it was found that he had divided his money among the Churches of Winter Park and the part falling to the Church of the Brethren was seven thousand seven hundred thirteen dollars (\$7,713). Since it was already evident that the congregation needed more room, this was an opportunity to arrange for a larger house. With the future in mind, a more suitable location was found at the corner of Harmon Avenue and

Clay Street. Brethren James A. Richards and Clarence E. Bower were selected as a Building Committee. After the Architect, H. W. McCord had drawn the plans, or about the first of October 1935, the work began with Brother Bower as the foreman. The work moved along rapidly and the new house was ready for dedication May 17, 1936. Dr. Paul H. Bowman of Bridgewater, Virginia preached the Dedication Sermon. Early in March the old church was moved on the rear of the lot and is now called Bethany Hall. All was paid for at Dedication except one thousand dollars and that was secured by a mortgage, held by the General Brotherhood Board, which was paid off in 1942. A lot had been donated on which to build a Parsonage and some money had been raised for the new building, so in the Spring of 1948 a loan was secured from the General Board. The building has been erected and in use now for several years with all indebtedness paid off.

From the organization up to 1947, the work was largely cared for by the Free Ministry, except the work of two Summer Pastors: Brother William Willoughby served during the Summer of 1942 and Bro. Samuel Flory the Summer of 1947. During that Summer, the Ministerial Board installed Elder E. J. Gascho as Pastor, to begin October 1, 1947. His services continued till July 1948 when Brother Floyd N. Biddix was installed as Pastor. The Eldership has been cared for by Elder Clarence E. Bower from the organization to the present.



The large crowds that attend the District Meetings as well as other special gatherings can be taken care of by the large auditorium of the new church. When necessary Bethany Hall can be used for 'overflow meetings, as well as the feeding place when meals are served at the church, as during District Meeting. The little chapel and its associate Sunday School rooms in the basement of the church can help out for Committee Meetings when needed. The District Meetings of 1940 and 1944 have both been cared for on these grounds and in these commodious buildings. The Sunday School rooms and Bethany Hall served as a camping place for about forty members who came here to attend the sessions of the Annual Conference that convened here in June of 1947. The District Meeting of 1949 was held at Camp Ithiel but the culinary duties were performed by the members of the Winter Park Church.

### BROOKSVILLE CHURCH

3/8/1925

In an article in the Messenger, Bro. Moore refers to a visit to Brooksville in the eighties when he first came to Florida. He attended services at the Baptist Church in the town. He thot the place suitable for some of our people later. October 31, 1921, Bro. Jesse Fulz and family of Ohio located a short distance east of town. When Walter Swihart was visiting in the community in July 1923

they had a Sunday School in the Fulz' home. Later in the Fall Jesse Root and family came south. In the early part of 1924 three families came into the community Perry Wysong, Ed. Diehl and Parker Cain. On October 20, 1924 they organized a Sunday School in the Diehl home. Soon it was transferred to the Parker Cain garage and continued there till the church was built.

The coming of the sixth family, Chas. F. Smith on Feb. 14, 1925 made them think of an organization. They were in the bounds of the Zion Church but they had no church house and the members were so far from each other that these decided that they wanted an organization in or near Brooksville. The District Committee of organization met with them March 8, 1925 and effected an organization with twenty charter members. Later four were baptized, making the membership twenty-four. Elder J. H. Garst was chosen Overseer of the group. A week later Bro. Noah F. Brubaker of McPherson, Kansas began meetings for them and at the close or about the 21st, a Love Feast was held at which twenty-seven members communed.

Brother Jesse Fulz gave two and one-half acres of ground east of Brooksville on which to build a house of worship. It was a beautiful location but too far from Brooksville to be accessible to the people of Brooksville. With the help of the people of Sebring and Lakeland a house of worship was soon in evidence. At the dedication Services May 21, Bro. Garst delivered the sermon. Soon after

the Dedication Brother and Sister Murray came to be joined with the group. They added much in personal and financial help to the small working body.

The coming of the R. W. Lantis family helped in solving the preaching problem for the small group. Later at a Business Meeting Brother Paul Lantis was called into the ministry and duly installed. The coming of Elmer Stambaugh added another family to the working group. A meeting held by Brethren J. W. Rogers and S. M. Miller added three to the membership. Here is a quotation from the Florida Live Wires of Feb. 1929: "In the death of Bro. Chas. F. Smith, our little Church called to her first real sorrow. Bro. Smith suffered much during the two years of his sickness. All was done that loving friends and professional skill could do but to no seeming avail. Early in his sickness he called for the anointing service and it was attended to and he seemed much benefitted. There was seldom a Service at the church during his sickness at which he was not remembered in Prayer. He was a great believer in Prayer and said it meant so much to him during his long sickness."

Moving day came and some of the Northern members went back to their former homes, leaving the ranks depleted. During the Depression and this exodus of members, Bro. and Sister Murray fitted up a place for the District Man and family to live and they took charge of the work to try to build it up again. Several were added by bap-

tism but part of them were of the migrant type and soon went to other places. During 1930 the membership discussed the matter of caring for the District Gatherings and it was decided that a call be made for the next District Meeting. During the Summer of 1931 a small kitchen with an upstairs was built at the east side of the church to care for the cooking and some sleeping quarters for some of the Brethren. By the faithful ones putting both shoulders to the wheel the meeting was cared for acceptably. Aunt Mina Smith and her helpers did an excellent job of preparing and serving the food after it had been purchased and brought there by Sister Stambaugh and her family.

On account of the Depression the District Man and his family began carrying the mail out of Groveland in 1932, hence had to move away from Brooksville. With no minister in the congregation and few members left, the attendance was very small and getting less all the time on account of many moving away. The Mission Board sent Bro. S. Ira Arnold and some others in to take care of the preaching but soon it was evident that the work could not be built up. Finally the services were discontinued and the house sold, giving letters to the few members that were left. Among the last to leave were Sister Otwell, the Murrays and the Chas. F. Smith family. The Smith children can be accounted for by looking in on a service in the Jacksonville Church to see Mable Jenkins and family, Russell Smith and family and Don Merrow



and Jessie. Ora Smith and youngest Sister Velma are busy helping in other church fields. The mother, Aunt Mina drops in every few years to make a visit and always lends a hand in whatever work is being done for the Church.

## Chapter IV

### CHURCH MISSIONS

#### CHURCH WORK AT CRATE MILLS

Thru the solicitation of Brethren J. H. Moore, J. H. Garst and J. F. Sanger a piece of land 100 by 270 was obtained on which to build a church house near the Crate Mills. The work really began when Brethren J. W. Rogers and J. F. Sanger on February 13, 1922 took their grubhoes and began clearing the land. Two weeks later an announcement went thruout the community that a Service would be held there the next day. A Sunday School was organized at this first service with Bro. S. S. Sanger, N. B. Flory and Hettie Bright as officers.

In the Spring of 1923 Branscomb Tue was baptized, he being the first new member in this community. During the Summer Brother J. W. Rogers held a meeting in which twenty-three were added to the Church thru baptism. During the Winter of 1923-24, Sister Mansfield gave a number of music lessons to the people. The attendance and interest were good. In February 1924 an addition was put to the small house of worship, to be used by the young people for their room. The dedication service was conducted by Eld. D. E. Miller who was the Sebring Pastor at that time. Another addi-

tion was put to the house in 1926 for the benefit of the small children. Later a small cottage was built to furnish a living place for the workers, Bertha Frantz and Jessie Dyer.

During the nine years of its existence many of the members of the Sebring Church did some work here. For more than two years Mrs. William Swank went regularly. When Sister Hettie Bright was not away at her school at Hicoria or Lake Istakpoga she helped out in the teaching. Sister Minnie Rogers taught so long that she could hardly give up her class and when she did she urged that a good teacher be found for it. Miss Martha Swank began teaching some small girls that when the work began that long ago are mistresses in the homes. During the Winter Season of 1924-25 Bro. and Sister Orion Erbaugh helped out by Bro. Erbaugh being Supt. and Sister Erbaugh had charge of the small ones.

During the pastorate of J. H. Morris and family, with the help of Sister Leah Gettel, Lora Shatto, Marie Young, Katherine Graybill, and Bertha Albin the work was carried on. Since the workers at the Crate Mills were mostly transients, when the depression came on they went where they could find work to earn a livelihood and the work went down and was finally closed. The buildings were sold. Tho it closed the work was not a failure for much good seed was sown and is growing up in some other communities in the lives of those that were there.

## THE GLENSIDE CHURCH

6/2/1929

Some members lived near and worked for the Glen St. Mary's Nursery and asked for some services to be held for them by the ministers of Clay County Church. After the ingathering thru the Revival Meeting they asked to be organized into a Church. The organization was effected June 2, 1929 with one elder, one deacon, one minister and sixteen lay members. At the District Meeting of 1930 the Sunday School enrollment was reported to be 59 with an average attendance of 38. This work went along amicably for a couple of years but then differences arose and the group asked for help of the District. A committee was appointed at the Brooksville District Meeting in 1931.

Four trips were made by a part or all of the committee and the members had a service each time. The following is the report they gave: "First we found deep-seated differences between members and leaders that can be worked out among themselves with wise sympathetic leadership. Second, we find that the unbending orthodoxy of the Pastor very greatly hinders the training of leaders and helpers. Third, we find that there are too many no-authorative fingers in the pie. Fourth, we find that they do not want to be disorganized but want to forget differences and have the privilege of beginning at the bottom and build up a place of worship and training helpers to carry on services.



The committee continued its work in 1933 and found the membership scattered but willing to be helped. At each of the three visits services were held for them with a goodly attendance. At the Sept. visit a service was held, some house to house visits and a Business Meeting held. At this meeting letters were given to Eld. A. D. Bowman and family for they were moving to Lakeland. The committee asked the Ministerial Board to assist them by giving them services frequently and have the members bear half the expenses. In late 1941 the Church was disorganized with instructions to the members to put their letters into the Church of the Brethren where it was convenient to the member.

### THE SUNNYLAND CHURCH

9/26/1929

Brother J. B. Gingery of Toledo, Ohio moved to Sebring before 1920 and during off-hours from his mercantile work, he did some scouting and fishing in the Istakpoga neighborhood. Here he made the acquaintance of some of the Native Floridians. When the school house was built in 1921, he proposed to Willis Kreider that they go there to hold some meetings and Bro. Kreider was willing to go with him. When the time came to go the weather was bad but they went. After several visits a Sunday School was organized with Bro. Gingery as Supt. Sister Mansfield was chosen to teach the Bible Class and Sister Swank to teach

the little folks. Before long the school house was too small and a Tabernacle was built and a Dedication Service arranged. The sermon was preached by Eld. D. H. Zigler of Sebring. More than one hundred twenty five attentive listeners were packed into the Tabernacle.

This work was kept up by Bro. Gingery and others from Sebring till the Spring of 1923 when Elder J. W. Rogers came to Florida to make his home while doing work in the Church. The Mission work at Istakpoga, Bassenger and Crate Mills was turned over to him and family. During the first three years of the work, Sister William Swank missed but few Sundays, going the 19 miles and back over the sand roads, sometimes so bad that it was almost impassible. After returning from Istakpoga, the workers went to the Crate Mills for a night service. Other helpers in the work were Bro. William Swank, who went every time and Sister Mansfield went for a year and a half; Sister Hettie Bright, who taught in the neighborhood lent her help too; The Tabernacle was only temporary quarters and had to be replaced by a real church house. The new house was finished and dedicated March 4, 1926. The financing had largely been done by the Brethren from Sebring and the Winter Visitors. The land on which it was built was donated by Brother Bass. The enlarged quarters now enhanced the interest. Also, Bro. and Sister J. D. Reish had come to take charge of the Day School at Istakpoga and could help in

the Sunday School created a greater interest in that community. The growth was rapid and the results permanent as shown by the reports at the District Gatherings.

About three years after the coming of Bro. and Sister Reish it was thot that there were members enough to be organized into a working body, so on September 26, 1929 the organization was effected, having 34 members and choosing Sunnyland as the name for the new organization. Many native Floridians were brought into the Church thru the efforts of Clarence Erbaugh, J. W. Rogers, J. H. Garst and L. L. Lininger in revival efforts at different times. The neighborhood was highly benefitted by the Sea Boord Railroad going thru and making a stop near the Church. Also the Post Office has made the place a center for the neighborhood.

Having a good church home and a body of good working members gave them courage to call for the next District Meeting. The body of delegates at Brooksville voted in favor and the District Meeting was held here in 1932. The ones who attended need not be told that the work was well done, for they were recipients of the wholehearted and efficient service of every member of the congregation. From the reports in future District Meetings, the growth was healthy and permanent with an ingathering of eleven in the year 1935.

Since Bro. Reish moved from the District at the close of 1941, that meant his closing out his

work with the Sunnyland Church, leaving the Church without a Pastor and minister. The District Ministerial Board for 1944 says that Bro. Horace Hill was caring for the work of the Sunnyland Church and that during the year it had the greatest increase in membership of any Church in the District.

Quoting from the Ministerial Report of 1949: "Brother Wayne Lawson of Peru, Indiana served the Sunnyland Church as Summer Pastor. He was a very earnest and conscientious young man. He visited in the homes of all the members. In order to get to some of them he had to walk several miles. He reported to the Secretary of the Board each week. He felt that much good could be done for that Church but needs to be now."

There being no minister in the congregation after Elder J. D. Reish moved away, the Ministerial Board along with the Sebring Church undertook to supply help. The Sebring Mission Board had sent Eld. Manly Deeter there for the winter of 1947-48. Eld. Clarence Erbaugh helped out some during the Winter of 1949-50. During the Summer of 1950 Brother Daniel C. Flory served them as Pastor. Brother Paul Denison served as Summer Pastor the following Summer. Besides the help given by Bro. Horace Hill of Okeechobee, the rest of the help came from Sebring Church. Some of the ministers that served from Sebring were, Brethren Ordo Pletcher, Irvin R. Pletcher and Harry Swank. Tho Lorida is a



small town and the Sunnyland Church is a small church yet we cannot predict the future of the work for it is a fertile country with a Highway, a good railroad and an active group of people.

### BASSENGER-OKEECHOBEE CHURCHES

11/4/1934

Brother J. B. Gingery of Toledo, Ohio did not stop in the Istakpoga neighborhood but wandered to the East about twenty-five miles into the Bassenger section and his acquaintance led to some meetings being held and some conversions and a Mission, known as the Bassenger work. Besides working in the Sunnyland Church, Bro. J. W. Rogers also took care of this work. A very primitive church was built and used for awhile but when the storm blew it down, some members of the Sebring Church with the help of some Winter visitors, put up for them a real neat and well-constructed church house. Several Revivals have been held in the Bassenger church adding a number to the church membership. Some of the best speakers among the Winter visitors were prevailed on to hold some meetings for them and the efforts have benefitted the work as well as welding a link between the northern minister and the southern native.

After the work was in the hands of Bro. and Sister Reish as Pastors at Sunnyland, and was well cared for by them, the Sebring Mission Board

appointed Eld. L. L. Lininger to take care of the work at Bassenger. Looking to the South, he found that some of the members were living inside the city limits of Okeechobee, so a move was made to open up work there to help these people in their religious life. To get the work started here Bro. and Sister Domer had one of their empty houses fitted up for a Sunday School house. They met on Nov. 5, 1933 but only twelve persons came and they decided not to organize till more were present. Thru personal work during the following days others were persuaded to come and on the day appointed, Nov. 19th there were twenty-four present. Two weeks later (Dec. 3) an all-day meeting was held at which time the newly-made meeting house was dedicated. The speakers were Brethren W. J. Swigart, L. L. Lininger, Walston (Baptist) H. A. Spanogle, Harry Swank, J. H. Moore and D. W. Miller. There were ninety present.

During the forenoon hours of every Lord's Day, Sunday School and Preaching Services were conducted in the new church, all during the month of January of 1934, usually a visiting minister accompanied Bro. Lininger. February 15, 1934 a revival began with Bro. Guy West doing the preaching and Bro. S. M. Miller doing the singing. These services lasted till Tuesday night the 20th with a service each night and three each Sunday. As a result Russell Domer and Earl Pearce were received into the Church thru baptism. These were the first converts in the Okeechobee work. Breth-

ren J. K. Miller of Iowa and Oller of Penn'a. who were in Sebring for the winter attended and gave talks at the services on the 25th. On the 11th of March, Bro. Amos Kuns of Penn'a. preached at the morning services and then all the group went to the Bassenger church where a revival service was begun with Bro. Kuns doing the preaching. On March 18th an all-day meeting was held at Bassenger with a Love Feast in the evening.

On May 27, 1934 Bro. A. D. Crist began Revival Services at Bassenger with Bro. Fahnestock of Penn'a. assisting and Fannie Marshall directing the music work. The meetings lasted three weeks and resulted in 18 being received into the church. On August 5, one more was baptized. During June a Business Meeting was held and Brethren Victor Domer and Elmer Pearce were called into the Deacon's office and they with their wives were duly installed. After some investigation of their membership an organization was called for and effected November 4, 1934. The following officers were chosen: J. H. Garst for Elder; Ruth Trumble for clerk; Ruby Bass for Treasurer; Amy Sloan (Bassenger) and Alene Bass (Okeechobee) for Choristers. At the Meeting, Nov. 25, 1934, Elder S. W. Bail and wife were received as members of this church. February 17, 1935 Bro. and Sister Horace Hill's letters were received.

After holding some meetings at Bassenger, Eld. I. N. H. Beahm began at Okeechobee March 3, 1935. Bro. Samuel M. Miller had charge of the music.

An all-day meeting was held March 17, 1935 with a Communion Service in the evening. Brethren J. W. Rogers and Worthington, a Retired Missionary in the Methodist Church had charge of the services March 24th. On March 31st, Eld. L. L. Lininger closed out his work with the Okeechobee-Bassenger churches because a full-time Pastor was being put in charge. On April 7, 1935 the new Pastor, Irving R. Pletcher took up the work. A mid-week Prayer Meeting was started April 17th, with twenty present. At the Mothers' Day Services May 12th Mrs. Henrietta Roberts was honored as the oldest mother (84) and Clara Davis as the youngest mother present, thirty-three years old. Each one of them was given a beautiful bouquet. An all-day service with a Children's service in the afternoon and evening was held June 30, 1935. The first Young People's Service was held October 20th. The Sisters met with Sister Elmer Pearce and organized a Ladies' Aid, Oct. 30th. During the first part of 1936 Bro. Pletcher held meetings at Bassenger, Sunnyland and Okeechobee churches. On April 12, 1936, an Easter Program was rendered and a Love Feast was held in the evening. Brother and Sister Enos Overholser who had been working in this church since it began called for their Church Letters.

October 4, 1936 a Special Council was held to discuss the matter of purchasing lots on which to build a new church. Later Councils discussed the building of the church and clearing the Title along



with other matters about the new building. Early in the Fall Sister Katherine Rinehart presented the church with a set of dishes to be used on Communion occasions. The Ladies' Aid purchased silverware to be used at Communion. When Bro. Pletcher left in November 1936, Elder S. W. Bail became the Pastor. On March 30, 1938 the first service was held in the new church. On April 17, 1938 the first Communion Service was held.

During the year 1939 Brother F. M. Hollenberg became Pastor and Elder of the Church and thru his efforts sixteen were added to the group thru baptism. During the following year with the help of the Executive Secretary, McKinley Coffman more than fifty were added, forty-five were baptized and six received letters. These additions placed the Okeechobee-Bassenger church at the head in membership in this District. The following year, 1941 thirty-five were added by baptism making the membership of the combined churches two hundred nineteen. Because of having a church house at each place and separate Services, the District Clerk listed the Bassenger group to be sixty one members and Okeechobee to be one hundred fifty-eight. In the Minutes of 1944, Taylor Creek is listed with a membership of twenty-four, making the combined membership two hundred twenty-five. The Pastor and his helpers, Brethren Horace Hill and Robert LaMartin cared for the three groups as one church.

When Bro. Fred M. Hollenberg moved from the District in 1944, Bro. Holly P. Garner was chosen

to be Pastor and he served for three years, or till March 1947. Besides the work as pastor, Bro. Garner helped out in many other places in the District. Elder Bruce Flora had served the Bassenger-Okeechobee church as Summer Pastor in 1939 and in 1947 he was called to be the regular Pastor. His work began at the regular pastoral date, September 1st. Besides his regular pastoral duties, he had to help dig out and build up many homes that were blown down during the Tropical Storm that struck Okeechobee August 20, 1949. The Red Cross assisted to the amount of possibly fifteen thousand dollars and money was sent to Bro. Flora thru the Brethren Service and donations from other Brethren helpers, to be used for Brethren families but Bro. Flora says he used it to help the needy, regardless of church affiliation. His time as pastor expired in August 1950 and Elder and Sister Walter Replogle were installed and began their pastoral duties Sept. first.

Since our space is limited, we cannot tell all we should of those who have visited and helped in the different parts of this congregation. Every year there were many visitors to Sebring and the Specials at the churches here gave them opportunities to see the places and lend a hand in preaching, teaching or financial aid for the work. Also some of our good able evangelists spent time in Florida and were willing to hold series of meetings in these needy places. Many of the members can trace their conversion to some out-of-the District

Evangelist. The work of this church has been blessed with good people back of it and has shown a marvelous growth in spite of some difficulties, hence we cannot predict the future. Leadership is reflected in the growth of any Church. The Eldership of the church was held mostly by the pastors but in several cases an outside Elder acted as the Presiding Elder.

### MIAMI CHURCH

6/15/1935

Soon after the birth of the new District of Florida and Georgia, a movement was put on foot to locate and help the members that had settled along the Eastern Seaboard. The first visit was made by Brethren Garst, Zigler and Morris in January of 1926. Services were held in Ft. Lauderdale at the home of Sister C. C. Ausherman and in the Turner home in Miami. There were more than a score of members along the Coast, from Wabasso to Homestead, but being so far apart made it impossible to hold a service for all to attend. The Miami Hurricane had caught some in Ft. Lauderdale and had destroyed much property for them so a small donation was sent them to help bear the loss.

Beginning in 1927 services were held frequently along the Coast, usually at Homestead or Ft. Lauderdale. Besides monthly services in the Cripe home near Homestead, an Annual Love Feast was held. Usually there were from twenty-five to

thirty-five people at these Feasts. No feast, tho large ever meant more to a group of members than this one did to these isolated members. A young minister, T. Simon Richardson from Roanoke, Virginia had taken work with an Insurance Company in Miami and thru an announcement in his copy of the Messenger learned about these services at Homestead. After attending the Love Feast and getting acquainted with the members and the work they were doing, he joined them and lent a helping hand. With the exception of the short time he was in Jacksonville, he was heart and hand and soul in the work in and around Miami. He saw the work grow from that in the homes to those held in the city church in North Miami.

Prior to November 1936, the Church of the Brethren had been holding services in the homes of the members and twice in a rented hall. These services were held each month and helped the members but were not making any contribution to the evangelizing program of the Brotherhood at large.

Directly north of the city a new subdivision, known as Pinewood Park, was laid out and some members moved into it to make it their homes. With a heart full of love for children, Sister Pearl Overholser could not rest till she knew the many children in this community had Sunday School privileges. At the next monthly meeting of the Church she brought to the attention of the group that there was no Sunday School within two miles of this



subdivision. After prayer over the matter and planning for it, the matter was discussed at the October meeting of the Church. Officers were elected and it was decided to open a Sunday School the first Sunday in November.

The Sunday School room was a framework with a tarpaulin stretched over it and seats were planks to sit on. Forty-four people met for the first religious service ever conducted in Pinewood Park. Besides the Sunday School, a preaching service was held each Sunday. By the time for the next service, the membership had decided that this was to be the future home of the Miami congregation. With this in mind Bro. Enos Overholser donated one lot and made arrangements for deferred payments on an adjoining lot so that a house might be built.

On Thanksgiving Day the members set to clear the lots and lay a foundation for a new church. At the time only seventy dollars (\$70) were available but thru the sacrifice of the members and friends of the work, a Church 24 by 40 was erected and on February 2, 1937 was dedicated free from debt. The dedication sermon was preached by Brother Ernest Coffman. On that same day he began a revival that resulted in six being added to the Church. Some of them had never heard of the Church of the Brethren before. Bro. Irvin Pletcher was serving as Pastor during the building operations and continued till the first of April. After April 1st Bro. Ellis Wagoner served as Pastor,

assisted by Bro. W. A. Newton. During his Pastorate, Bro. Wagoner held a Revival in which thirteen were baptized.

In May 1938 Bro. Richardson returned from Jacksonville and took charge of the work of the Miami Church. During that year the church was enlarged and a basement was added to care for the Sunday School classes. The money for the building and repair was secured thru a loan from the General Mission Board and donations of the members and other interested persons. Bro. Enos Overholser with one helper, gave all his time for the construction, assisted by the minister and other members and friends whenever possible. Bro. Amza Price assisted by moving the church back to the present location. With the added room the members felt they could care for the District Gatherings, so they sent a call to the meeting in Sebring and their wish was granted and the Meeting came to this church in October 1939. The statement in the Resolutions sums up how well they were cared for by this new Church: "We are grateful to the youngest Church in the District for the way it cared for us during the three days we were there, no comfort lacking any of us."

The work moved along regularly and the membership grew thru baptisms till it had gone from 64 to 86. A request to the Elders at the Tampa Meeting, asking for the ordination of Bro. Simon Richardson and it was attended to in the Miami Church Dec. 17, 1941. The call for the District

Meeting was again heeded and in 1945 the church played host for those gatherings. As in the previous meetings the care was praised by all who attended. This and many other things testify to the good work being done by the Pastor and his loyal helpers.

In May 1948 a loan was received from the General Mission Board to build a new parsonage. The building was erected by Ray Hamblen with the help of members and Pastor, who helped by donating his time. Donations of furniture and linens were made by members and friends and the Ladies' Aid purchased a refrigerator. An Apartment was fitted up on the second floor to be used to help make payments on the loan.

If space can be allowed for a brief summary, The District Man would like to acknowledge some of the many kindnesses, the open houses, the liberal help and earnest prayers of the Grant Mahan family, Brother and Sister Noah Cripe, Bro. Amza Price and family, Sister Amanda Snyder, the C. E. Schult family, the Gahagan family, the Spalding family (Davies), Sister C. C. Ausherman and husband, Brother and Sister Hershberger, Brother and Sister Watts, with Bro. and Sister C. S. Beers and Sister Alice Eby of Wabasso, Eld. and Sister C. C. Price who moved here and located at Lake Worth. Bro. Price assisted with the preaching and served as Presiding Elder a part of the time while they lived in the District. All of these gave valuable help in these earlier days of the work along the East Coast of Florida.

Sadness spread about the Camp and thruout the membership on August 20, 1950 when it was telegraphed that Bro. Simon Richardson had had a Heart Attack and had passed away at three A.M. that morning. He had just returned to Miami from Camp Ithiel where he had been helping in the teaching at Family Camp. During Sunday afternoon he had taken his load of children from the Camp to their homes and spent the evening in his home and the Church. After several months of supply services at the church, Brother E. J. Gascho was called for Pastor and served till September 1st 1951. At that time Eld. C. H. Petry was installed and has served to the present.

### JACKSONVILLE CHURCH

7/12/1942

On account of opportunities to earn a living some of the members went to Jacksonville from the Clay County Church and later moved there. Some moved there from other places or started their married life in the city. The distance to the Clay County Church was a hindrance to regular attendance at Sunday School and Preaching Services so in the early forties they began calling for an organization in Jacksonville which was granted July twelfth, 1942. There were ten families, making fifteen members that made up the charter members of the new congregation: Bro. John Motes and wife, Loree, Russell Smith and wife, Christine,



Maurice, Dicksonia and Lucile Futch, Harold Jenkins and wife, Mabel, J. C. Jenkins, T. B. Jenkins, Ola McLean, Mildred Hurst and Jessie Merrow.

Elder S. Ira Arnold and wife moved into Jacksonville in October 1942 and he began working in the factory from their home in the Trailer, continuing for eight years in the Trailer House. In November 1942 Brother Arnold was chosen part-time Pastor and as such he continued till the Lord called him home in 1953. Bro. H. B. Layman was chosen as Overseer at the organization and continued two years when Bro. Arnold was chosen and served till his death in early 1953.

During the Fall of 1944 a lot was purchased at 4965 College Street. During the Holiday Season a small building was moved to the new location and after repairs were made, the services were transferred from the home of Bro. and Sister Harold Jenkins where they had been held for two years or more. This small house served as the place of worship from April 1945 till the house was enlarged during the Winter of 1947-'48. Since that time the house has proved large enough to entertain several of the District Gatherings.

In summarizing the tangible results of the work, we find, two Evangelistic Meetings were held: one by Bro. A. D. Crist in March of 1946, for two weeks; one by Bro. J. W. Fidler in February of 1950. Bro. Norman McLean was licensed to preach in 1949 and has done good work and is going on with his preparation at the Toccoa Falls Institute in Georgia.

The Church has a 100% Messenger Club since 1947. On April 4th, 1944 eight were baptized, these being the first in the new organization. Besides the fifteen charter members twenty-two have been baptized, twenty-one received by letter and one reclaimed, making a total of fifty-nine members. Counting the losses in different ways there are at present about fifty members. The abilities as students and leaders can be gained by knowing that five have been to College one or more years and that this congregation furnishes more than its quota of District Board members.

## Chapter V

### CHURCH ACTIVITIES

#### CHILDREN'S WORK IN FLORIDA

Soon after Florida and Georgia became a separate District some plans were made for work for the children in Sebring. A small house on the Oak Street side of the Church furnished a place for it. This kindergarten work did not reach any children outside of the congregation. The workers were Sisters Nellie Kneisley, Leah Gettel with others later. Bertha Frantz came to the District to help out the Children's work at the beginning of 1929. Bertha Albin had been helping out in Vacation Bible Schools during the year 1927 and then she began teaching at Chosen and worked among the children there in Sunday School. A Parsonage was erected at the Crate Mills and Sisters Bertha Frantz and Jessie Dyer moved there to work among the children seven days a week. In 1930 Lois Lauver and her mother moved to East Tampa and began working among the children in Sunday School and also did some kindergarten work during the week. During the year 1930 and the first half of the next year, Sister Frantz helped out in children's work in the Winter Park Church. At the Mid-Summer Sunday School Meeting held in Sun-

nyland Church in 1935 a new venture was made so that the meeting would mean more to the children of the District. Those attending felt it was worthwhile. The discussions were in different age-groups instead of a general discussion. This plan appealed to the workers and proved very helpful in forwarding the children's work in the District and was followed.

Quoting from the report in the 1938 Minutes, the following shows the interest of the General Board in our children's work: "At the suggestion of the General Board at Elgin, Sister Anna Miller was asked to attend the 1938 Retreat for District Directors of Children's Work. The Board voted to allow twenty-five dollars toward the expense of this representation to be paid from the District funds." In the report of 1939 we note that Sister Anna Miller was soon chosen as Director of children's work in Florida. Quoting again: "An outstanding event of this year's calendar was the Children-Workers' Retreat planned by Sister Anna Miller and Brother McKinley Coffman and held at the Deepwater Manor Hotel in DeSoto City on November 28-30, 1940.

In the Minutes of 1944 are these things about the children's work for that year: "We your committee wish to report that in connection with the Board of Christian Education a large program was arranged and carried out in Bible Schools for children in Winter Park, Okeechobee, Sunnyland and Miami, and a joint school with the Presbyterians in



Sebring. There was a total enrollment of 319 and an average attendance of 190 and a total offering of \$62.08. This money was used largely for China Relief. In the joint school at Sebring, the offerings were used for Leper Relief." During the Summer of 1945 Sister Dessie Miller, the Regional children's worker came into the District and visited in most of the Churches. Sister Minna Heckman was also in the District and represented the Children's work at the Regional Conference at Bridgewater College.

The report to the District Meeting at Arcadia in 1946 says that Sister Anna Miller was reappointed as Children's Director and her term of office is to be five years. At her request two helpers were appointed: Sisters Hester Chambers and Elta Hamblen of Miami. A budget of fifty dollars was granted to them. For the year, besides the regular Sunday School program they have responded well in giving soap, clothing, toys, and canned goods when the need was presented. Some helped to buy blankets. Some gave to the heifer project, and some bought service stamps. Several Thanksgivings and Christmas baskets were taken to needy families. One used the penny-a-mile plan for missions. Several groups put forth special efforts in memory work on the Christmas Story and certain Psalms. Other projects included helping to clean Sunday School Rooms, painting Class Room Furniture and contributing to the Conference budget. One Church had a D.V.B.S. and another joined a Union School. Sisters Anna Miller and Hester

Chambers attended the Workshop for Children's Cabinet members at Bridgewater July 15 to 19. This is a new venture for the South-Eastern Region but those who attended felt it was quite worthwhile.

From the Minutes of 1947: "The Children-Worker's Institute held at Thanksgiving time in Sebring was possibly the most outstanding experience enjoyed by the workers of the District during the year. Miss Dessie Miller who is the National Children's Director was our guest speaker. Those who attended enjoyed the fellowship, inspiration and help received. Sister Anna Miller attended the Children-Director's Conference in Des Moines, Iowa, July 20 to 23 and also the International Sunday School Convention from July 23 to 27. Our children who attended the Annual Conference at Orlando enjoyed a Special treat in the children's sessions each morning and afternoon which was planned for the various age-groups. Sister Anna Miller had charge of the kindergarten group.

Quoting from the report of 1948: "Because of my accident a year ago, I have been unable to do anything myself. I corresponded with the Sunday Schools about their work for and with the children. Daily Vacation Bible Schools were held in four of the churches with good results. Several schools sent packages to over-seas children and gave each month for Relief. Others filled towel bags and sent them to boys and girls in other countries. Some called on the sick in Hospitals and homes and sang for them. Others gave Thanksgiving baskets to

needy families. As far as reported, over \$100 in cash was sent and used for Relief.

Sister Hester Chambers, a member of the Children's Cabinet met with the Children's Workers that attended the Sunday School Convention in Jacksonville in May. Some workers attended training schools and read books to improve their efficiency. The value of visiting in pupil's homes has been emphasized. Brethren Graded Lessons are being used in most of the Children's departments of our Sunday Schools.

Our Children's Director, Sister Anna Miller says that in January 1949 the Churches in Florida were favored by a visit from Miss Eva Kindig in the interest of children's work. Her contacts were much appreciated. The work has gone steadily on in different schools. There have been some discouragements but in some of our schools the attendance has increased to the extent that more room is needed to care for the children adequately. About 200 children had the privilege of attending Daily Vacation Bible School. Much interest continues in Relief projects. More than \$150 have been contributed by the Children's groups, besides sending of Christmas bags over-seas. Various social gatherings have been enjoyed by both teachers and pupils.

From the report of the Board of Christian Education, I cull these facts because it includes the report of the Children's work. "Two Conferences for workers were held during 1951, one in Jack-

sonville and one in Okeechobee, with Dessie Miller as director. Six Vacation Schools were held, with an enrollment of 380. Fifty-four children of Junior and Primary age attended the family camp at Camp Ithiel. The Children's Director was sister Anna Miller. The Intermediates were directed and cared for by Sister Martha Horton. Various projects were promoted thru these groups of children and a total of \$145.89 was contributed by them.

### THE LIFE CONFERENCE MEETINGS

At the beginning of the year 1925, there were five groups of young people among the members of that many congregations, scattered about in the different parts of Florida. Most of them were strangers to each other, tho some had met at Sebring District Conference. Some other members had located at Brooksville, Lakeland and Winter Park. Among these groups almost half of them were young people. During the first half of the year three new organizations had been formed. There were now eight groups of young people but widely scattered. A get-to-gether meeting was planned so that they might get to know each other. During July invitations were sent out to come to Sebring the first of August for a Sunday School and Young People's Meeting. Songs, Declamations, Readings and Addresses made up the program. Each group had furnished its part. The young people were getting acquainted and learning that



they were a part of the group to build up Christ's Kingdom in this great Southland. Some of these friendships have grown to be life companionships that are helping hold the work together.

At the District Meeting at Arcadia in October of 1925 the young people met for a Sunrise Meeting. After a brief talk by Brother Crist and a number of prayers and several other matters, an organization was formed. Since the congregations were so far apart and they could not get from the North to the South, the District was divided into North and South. The groups in the North had joint programs in their several churches as often as possible and in the South a similar plan was followed. The one president of the District was to help both North and South by getting into each congregation once each year. Thru a decision made at the Clay County District Conference, the Young People's organization had the standing of a regular District organization and made its plans and transacted its own business.

Soon after the District Meeting in Clay County, the young people and ministers began planning for a joint meeting. Topics were to be discussed that would be of general interest to both, ministers and young people. From the beginning these meetings were held in the Seneca congregation and suitable buildings to take care of the cooking for the crowds were provided. Also, the Square House was fitted up to take care of sleeping quarters for some, while others had tent space or were distribut-

ed thruout the community in the homes of friends. The meetings being in December were sometimes a bit uncomfortable for some if the weather turned cold about that time.

The first meeting was held at New Year's time of 1926-27. It was arranged with the General Mission Board for Bro. and Sister Homer Bright to be at this meeting. Besides the Mission talks and Pictures, they assisted in the discussions of the topics relating to the Life Work of the young people. Also, as speakers the Conference had Elders D. H. Zigler and B. C. Whitmore who were spending the Winter in Florida. Sister Margaret Bixler Garrett discussed many matters of music work in the Church. She also assisted in the congregational singing. This first conference was a great help in cementing the different groups together so that a better understanding would lead to co-operation in the work of this new field. It was demonstrated here that it was not old and young but all one in this field of work for the Lord.

The Conferences of 1928 and 1929 were largely in the hands of the local talent and the Winter Visitors: Elders D. H. Zigler and W. J. Swigart and some helpers. For the 1930 Conference the group had Dr. Rufus Bowman as the out-of-the-District speaker. His work with that of the young people made a helpful meeting. With Bro. Guy West and Sister Ruth Schriver from outside and our home helpers the Conference of 1931 was a very helpful and worthwhile three days together.

For the 1932 Conference Bro. R. W. Schlosser came from Sebring where he was conducting Revival Services. The Sebring Church allowed him to come away from his meetings for a part of two days and the one evening. Brother M. R. Zigler of Elgin spent the whole three days at the Conference, helping out in the discussions. Also we had the help of Bro. Manly Deeter for the meetings. The Conference of 1933 was not so well attended on account of money matters but the meetings were above the standard on account of Dr. D. W. Kurtz being the outside helper and as a part of his work, he gave three of his world lectures. Again in 1935 Brother Zigler was at the Conference to help out in the discussions and gave several sermons.

There were two outside helpers at the 1936 Conference: Brother Paul Bowman, Jr., and Bro. E. S. Coffman. Their work was of high quality and added much to its Spirituality as well as the help in the field of Recreation. The 1937 Conference had as its outside helper, Eld. F. E. Williar of Mt. Airy, Md. The last two Sessions of the Conference were conducted mostly by the local talent and the Executive Secretary McKinley Coffman. In all there were thirteen sessions of the Life Conference in as many years about New Year's time with excellent attendance and deeply Spiritual meetings. The local talent did an especially good piece of work in speaking and helping out in the programs. Many of the tourists who became

regular Winter visitors worked shoulder to shoulder with the Florida members. The singing deserves special mention for its beauty and Spirituality. The Florida District owes a debt of gratitude to the Missionaries, College Men and women, the Bethany Faculty members and the Secretaries from the Board at Elgin for the added Inspiration and Spirituality they brought to this Southland.

### CAMP LIFE IN FLORIDA

Early in the work of the Florida and Georgia District an effort was made to get as many as possible of the people together once a year for a Social and Religious gathering. This meeting became the Life Conference and met around Christmas time. These meetings did not furnish much for the Juniors and Intermediates neither did it solve the Summer Vacation problem for the younger generation. All this made it necessary to try to plan something for these Summer weeks of July and August, so the need of a Summer Camping period.

The first effort was made in the Summer of 1929 when Brethren H. M. Landis and J. H. Morris gathered about twenty boys to Brooksville to spend a couple of days out of doors. On the second day they went to the Gulf on a fishing trip to get fish for an evening fry. That year the girls' camp did not materialize but the following year Sister Bertha Frantz gathered some Intermediate girls to Brooks-



ville and they decided to go out to Weekiwatchee Springs to spend a day and a night. The accommodations were not good but they had some pleasant experiences and the effort was worthwhile. During this year Brethren H. M. Landis, T. E. Jenkins and J. H. Morris took the boys to Kingsley Lake, near Green Cove Springs for their camping out. During the two days out in the real open world all had many pleasant experiences.

This quotation from the District Meeting Minutes will explain the Camp for the following year: "The Board of Religious Education sponsored a Mid-Summer Sunday School Meeting which was well attended and much enjoyed and led to good. Also, the Board sponsored two Camps for the Intermediates. Both were held at Seneca during August. There were about a dozen at each camp who spent two full days and three nights in good Social and Spiritual outing." While there is no report in the minutes about the next three years yet the program states that it was held here for four years in succession and usually in August.

Quoting from the District Meeting Minutes of 1937: "The presence and help of Brethren M. R. Zigler and E. S. Coffman at the Sunday School Meeting were much appreciated. At this meeting Bro. Zigler said that the General Mission Board would give fifty dollars (\$50) toward the expense of a leader to go to Camp Bethel for training. The District responded with an offering of \$52.43. Bro. and Sister Philip Lauver went as the repre-

sentatives and took with them Floyd Reish and John Earl May. Sixty seven campers and twelve leaders attended the Camp at Seneca in August. This number taxed the accommodations to the limit but the camp was good and very highly praised."

"A total of seventy two persons attended the three sessions of the camp. The response of the campers was enthusiastic and wholesome. In forum discussion, the Young People's Camp chose 'ITHIEL' as the Camp name. The Hebrew word meaning, 'God with me' best expresses the meaning of the camp experience to all of them. The presence of Misses Deane Rumberg, Dorothy Miller, Frances Layman and Mr. Marvin Martin was an inspiration and help. Their skilful and devoted leadership did much to set up proper Christian atmosphere and ideals for our camp. They came here to assist at their own expense."

Brother Philip Lauver was selected to serve as director of the Summer Camps of 1939. There were twenty-eight young people enrolled in the 1939 session. Fifty-eight Junior-Intermediates were enrolled in their part of the camp. The leaders of the camp had expected some outside help but when it did not come, they called on the Summer Pastors that were in the churches and the work was well done and proved helpful to them and the District.

The Camp in 1940 was held in DeSoto City with the accommodations for eating and sleeping at the Deepwater Manor Hotel. The Intermediates

and Young People's Camps were very successful under the leadership of Brother McKinley Coffman. There were 80 Intermediates and 32 Young People attended. There were several leaders from outside the District: Bro. and Sister Earl Flohr and children, Miriam Blough and Mervin Martin.

The Camps for 1941 were held at Camp Wingman, near Avon Park. Under these more favorable circumstances and the whole-hearted cooperation of his helpers, Brother Coffman was able to direct two very worthwhile camps. His helpers for the Young People were Bro. and Sister Earl Flohr and Julia Ann, Margaret West, Vera W. Miller and F. M. Hollenberg. There were thirty young people present. To help with the sixty Intermediates, there were Bro. and Sister Flohr and Julia Ann, Margaret West, Vera W. Miller, Christine Via, Georgia Swank, Elbert Reish and H. M. Landis. Again in 1942 the camp was held at Camp Wingman. The Board of Christian Education appointed Brethren F. M. Hollenberg and Edgar Stauffer to arrange for and conduct a camp in the absence of McKinley Coffman from the District. All the campers came at the same time, July 27 and remained till August first. The total attendance was ninety-two and directed by twelve leaders.

The Camp for 1944 was held at Camp We Wa (a Boy Scout Camp near Plymouth). The camp was held from August 21 to 27. The age-range was from nine to nineteen and the whole attendance was forty-four. The camp sponsored several pro-

jects: eighty dollars eighteen cents (\$80.18) was contributed toward a permanent Camp Site; Seven dollars fifteen cents (\$7.15) was raised for Greek Relief; An Extension Course from Bethany Biblical Seminary during the next year, possibly during July. The next year's camp was held at the same place with sixty-eight in attendance besides the week-end visitors. The attendants ranged in age from four to seventy years. Sixty-two dollars and eleven cents were raised for payment on a permanent Camp Site. Also sixty-seven dollars and sixty cents were raised for the heifer project. One camper, Tommy Furber, accompanied a boat load of heifers from Baltimore to the destination abroad. Toys and garments were made during the camp week to be sent to the New Windsor Relief Center.

For the report of the 1946 camp we go to the District Meeting Minutes: "Camp Ithiel met at WE WA for the third time from July 29 to August 4. The camp was of the family type and consisted of campers, ranging in age from two to seventy-two. There were two great-grandmothers in the camp. There were fifty enrolled campers with eleven leaders. The offering projects for the camp were a Camp Site and heifers for relief, the amount to be divided on a fifty-fifty basis. The total offerings, including Sunday Morning amounted to \$110.53. The balance above running expenses amounted to \$69.79. It was decided to place this amount in the project fund, hence the total funds



amounted to one hundred eighty dollars and eighty two cents. The leaders were H. P. Garner, T. Simon Richardson, Ruth West, Christine Via, Martha Horton, Edward Hollenberg, Margaret West and Joseph May. The camp for 1947 met at Camp WE WA soon after the Annual Meeting closed, being from June 22 to 28th. Brother Perry Huffaker had promised to lead the work but after his sudden illness at Annual Meeting he was compelled to give it up and Mrs. Georgia Swank was appointed by the Council of Boards to be the director. The enrollment was sixty eight with fine groups of each age-group present.

Since no camp site could be found, no camps were held during the Summer of 1948. The District Meeting Minutes has the following about the Camp situation this year: "Camp Ithiel became a reality in December 1948. While many planned and worked toward it, yet to Bro. C. E. Bower goes the credit of making it a reality. The Christmas Season marked the beginning here when the site and some buildings were purchased and plans for laying out the Camp Site were made. Thru the faithful efforts of the Winter Park Church and a couple of District Work Camps it was possible to have a Family Camp July 24 to 31, 1949 with an enrollment of 93, and a Young People's Camp with 23 enrolled. Brother Floyd Biddix was director with Bro. Bruce Flora as Business Manager of both.

Four buildings had been moved on the new

Camp Grounds and fitted up to care for good-sized gatherings during the Spring of 1949. Some of our Sister Denominations began to plan for a camping season for their own young people, among them the Church of God came and rented and used the Camp for themselves. The Summer of 1950 was a busy season with the Baptist group, the Church of God a second season as well as our own two camps (Family Camp of about 100 and Young People). The after camp picnics (Seventh Day Advents and others) with the Christmas Parties following later in the year.

Since the Old Seneca Church house was standing idle yonder in the woods, it was thot best to move it to the Camp for use in Religious Services. A new roof, lined anew inside, repaired on the weather boarding and around the windows and several coats of White Paint makes it look like a new White house. Having been built more than sixty years ago of choice lumber it responded to the paint and now has the appearance of a new house. It can be used for the larger crowds and being a place dedicated to God makes it a sacred enclosure to many of the Florida members. Since a successful effort is being made to make the surroundings appeal to the Spiritual nature, the Youth for Christ appreciate having their Week-end Retreats on the ground and they bring a Spiritual Atmosphere with them.

## FLORIDA LIVE WIRES

Soon after the work in the New District got under way, the Pastor of the Sebring Church had a four-page paper printed in order to send out some of his announcements and the papers being well-received caused him and some others to think of a District paper. To pay for the paper and its printing the stores in town put 'ads' on the fourth page. Since soliciting 'ads' and collecting for them monthly and that they took one-fourth of the space of the paper, it was decided to try to finance the paper by donation instead and then the whole four pages would be for news and announcements. Many of the donors were loyal and liberal and the cost was not heavy on any one.

Many of the Winter Visitors wanted it during the Summer when they were in the North so that added postage to the expense but that would be very small if the paper could be mailed at news paper postage so an effort was made to get such rates. One of the requirements for such was the Subscription List. The Government allowed the Second-class postage but the subscription list was difficult to get but some kept working at it. One Elder made a list of his members and sent it to the editor and paid the price from his own pocket. When it was found that the bona fide subscription list could not be made up and maintained rather than burden any one, the paper was dropped and not printed and sent out to the members of the

congregations and friends. It was a disappointment to many for it had been a good way to keep in touch with the work and workers of the District. Besides what was said by others, the editor felt that much good had been done by monthly pamphlet as it went into so many homes for ten or more years.



## Chapter VI

### CHURCH SUMMARIES

#### THE SILVER TROPHY MEMBERS OF THE CHURCHES

With the assistance of several leaders of the District we compared the membership of 1950 with that of 1925 and we found that a hundred or more of the same people had been in the work the whole twenty-five years. Of course, many of the Charter Members have gone. Some have gone to be with the Heavenly Father while others have moved to other Districts and some have drifted from the Church back into the world. We wish we could single out these faithful ones and put their names into this history but space and cost forbid that, so you will have to check your record to see whether you classify for that honor.

For lack of a better name, we will call them Silver Trophy Members from the Silver Anniversary of the married folks who have lived together for twenty-five years. Besides the ministers and deacons that came here and organized the several churches, their children have been the real backbone of the church work during this twenty-five year period that ended in 1950. Most of these second-generation leaders have married and their chil-

dren are now taking over many of the responsible places in the District. Bro. J. W. Chambers and wife (both have gone to their Heavenly Home) worked in three of the congregations have three great-grand children that are now being trained to help carry on the work when they get old enough.

The Yearbook of 1897 lists J. R. Leatherman at Woodley, Florida in the Indian River territory. In 1898 Eld. C. D. Hylton with the assistance of Elder Samuel Eby organized a church called the Indian River Church and placed Eld. J. R. Leatherman in charge as Overseer. After a year or so the church ceased to function and the next work we find Eld. Leatherman connected with is at Chosen where he again is the Presiding Elder. His first twenty-five years were in church work in those two communities. The second twenty-five years were spent in and around West Palm Beach but was not affiliated with the church all of the time. Living in the bounds of the Miami Church, when he was reinstated in the Church, he automatically fell into the membership of that church but being so far from the church he chose to do his work thru money help for Mission Work in the Brotherhood at large.

The real meaning of a Silver Trophy Member is: the person shall have lived in a Florida or Georgia congregation continuously for twenty-five years, assisting all the time in the work of the Church, doing what he or she is able to do for the

Lord. My wish and prayer are that some of these Silver Trophy Members may some day be qualified for Golden Trophy Members in the Greater Florida Churches.



## DISTRICT MEETING OFFICERS

1925	Arcadia	J. H. Garst	Frank Young	Glenn Carr
1926	Clay County	J. H. Garst	J. H. Morris	J. D. Reish
1927	Winter Park	J. H. Garst	J. W. Rogers	J. D. Reish
1928	Sebring	J. H. Morris	A. D. Crist	H. M. Landis
1929	Tampa	J. H. Garst	A. D. Crist	H. M. Landis
1930	Clay County	A. D. Crist	D. E. Miller	J. H. Morris
1931	Brooksville	D. E. Miller	A. D. Crist	J. H. Morris
1932	Sunnyland	A. D. Crist	C. E. Bower	J. H. Morris
1933	Lakeland	C. E. Bower	H. A. Spanogle	H. M. Landis
1934	Winter Park	H. A. Spanogle	J. D. Reish	J. H. Morris
1935	Sebring	H. M. Landis	J. D. Reish	J. H. Morris
1936	Arcadia	S. G. Fahnestock	J. D. Reish	J. H. Morris
1937	Tampa	H. M. Landis	J. D. Reish	J. H. Morris
1938	Sebring	C. E. Bower	A. D. Crist	J. H. Morris
1939	Miami	H. M. Landis	J. D. Reish	J. H. Morris
1940	Winter Park	J. D. Reish	M. Coffman	C. E. Shuler
1941	Tampa	McKinley Coffman	F. M. Hollen'g	C. E. Shuler
1942	Okeechobee	F. M. Hollenberg	Edgar Stauffer	I. R. Pletcher



1943	Sebring	A. D. Crist	T. S. Richardson	I. R. Fletcher
1944	Winter Park	T. S. Richardson	Edgar Stauffer	I. R. Fletcher
1945	Miami	H. P. Garner	D. D. Fleishman	F. M. Hollenberg
1946	Arcadia	C. E. Bower	T. S. Richardson	F. M. Hollenberg
1947	Okeechobee	A. D. Crist	I. R. Fletcher	J. D. Reish
1948	Sebring	Bruce Flora	I. R. Fletcher	J. D. Reish
1949	Camp Ithiel	H. B. Heisey	T. S. Richardson	J. D. Reish
1950	Camp Ithiel	H. B. Heisey	O. M. Fletcher	I. R. Fletcher
1951	Camp Ithiel	Floyd Biddix	Norman McLean	I. R. Fletcher



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HISTORY  
OF THE  
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